

HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS

3/2015

Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences Comenius University



Theme:

**Sustainable Development
Goals – New Challenges
in Human Rights Area**

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2 Topic of the issue

Sustainable Development Goals – New Challenges in Human Rights Area

„Year 2015 is an historic and unprecedented opportunity to bring the countries and citizens of the world together to choose new paths to improve the lives of people everywhere. These decisions will determine the global course of action to end poverty, promote prosperity and well-being for all, protect the environment and address climate change.

The actions taken in 2015 have resulted in new sustainable development goals that build on the eight Millennium Development Goals which have been adopted at a special summit of the General Assembly held from 25 to 27 September 2015.

The UN has been working with governments, civil society and other partners to build on the momentum generated by the MDGs and carry on with an ambitious post-2015 development agenda.

As of 2 August 2015 the 193 UN Member States reached an agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals. The ‚five Ps‘ - people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership - capture the broad scope of the agenda.

The agreement on the Agenda builds on the successful outcome of the Conference on Finance for Development that was recently concluded in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Background

In 2000, world leaders set out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thanks to millions of people taking action and a massive global effort, we have already made real progress. The number of people living in poverty has fallen to less than half of

its 1990 level. Over two billion people have gained access to better drinking water.

Yet, 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty. Every four seconds a child dies from preventable causes and over 800 million, particularly women and young people, suffer from chronic hunger. Meanwhile the world's population is set to rise to 9.5 billion by 2050 and the food system is at breaking point.

Climate change threatens to destroy the lives of millions more and undo the progress reached so far. Inequality is growing everywhere and human rights are being undermined in the world's most fragile and conflict affected countries while the world economy continues to falter.

A debate on what should follow the MDGs when they expire in 2015 was necessary.

Process

The Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 initiated an inclusive intergovernmental process to prepare a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). An Open Working Group, consisting of 30 UN member country representatives presented a proposal for the SDGs in September 2014. The proposal already contained a set of 17 goals.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the team brings together more than 60 UN agencies and international organizations.

In its first report to the Secretary-General, *Realizing the Future We Want for All*, the Task Team outlined a vision for the post-2015 development

agenda and suggests four key dimensions which can help to guide goal setting. These are: (1) inclusive social development; (2) inclusive economic development; (3) environmental sustainability; and (4) peace and security. The Task Team also looked at how different themes could potentially be reflected in a new framework.

In July 2012, the Secretary-General launched his High-level Panel of Eminent Persons to provide guidance and recommendations on the post-2015 development agenda. The report of the Panel published in May 2013 concluded that the post-2015 agenda needs to focus on: leaving nobody behind; putting sustainable development at the core; transforming economies for jobs and inclusive growth; building peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all; and forging a new global partnership;

These processes were complemented by national consultations in more than 60 countries and a set of eleven thematic consultations organized by the United Nations Development Group. The eleven thematic consultations were: conflict and fragility; education; environmental sustainability; governance; growth and employment; health; hunger, food and nutrition; inequalities; population dynamics; energy; and water. Regional consultations were organized by the Regional Economic Commissions.

An Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing published options to finance the future development goals.

In order to ensure coherence across the different work streams an informal senior coordination group of four Assistant Secretaries-General (ASGs) has been put in place.

Over the course of the year 2014, several General Assembly events were convened by the President of the Gen-

eral Assembly under the theme „The Post-2015 Development Agenda - Setting the Stage“.

A final report by the Secretary-General was presented in January 2015. The report blends key recommendations that will see 2015 as truly a time for global action.

Intergovernmental negotiations started at the beginning of the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Negotiations ended in September 2015 when the new development framework was adopted at the UN General Assembly.

Major differences between the MDGs and SDGs include how they were developed, what they include and who they address.“[1]

State of art in development cooperation and human rights agenda

Situation in 2015 was pushed forward. On 70th annual session of UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015 there was adopted Resolution A/RES/70/1: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this document there were adopted 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), while some of them are copying or spread previously not fully achieved millenium development goals. All goals and targets are formulated more complex, as agenda or portofolio, where several national and international stakeholders have to cooperate to achieve them.

As stated in the Resolution: *Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all seg-*

ments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. (point 4).

It confirms the most important part of the agenda, that the human rights and human dignity is behind of the goals and the final status is focused on people, equality and dignity. Human rights became leading principles of international policy, the value, which is not only popular, but which is common to all stakeholders and should be exercised in practice, not only claimed.

Sustainable development goals

- End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Reduce inequality within and among countries

- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

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Notes:

[1] full text in original available: <http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/topics/2013/post-15-development-agenda.html>

* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. Source: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7891Transforming%20Our%20World.pdf>



3 Country Focus

Human Rights in American Campaign to the Top Position

In spring 2017 in the United States important election of a new US president will be held, but the campaign has been running, in essence, from the time when Barack Obama began his second round in the White House.

Last six years of his administration in human rights issues are generally assessed as very positive. Already the inaugural speech made him the first president who used the word "gay" to refer to a different sexual orientation or mentioned historical facts of the American women struggle for equality to men. Not to mention, for example, change of his position to the same-sex marriages, and especially many policies taken in this area, as permission to serve in the army, and so on.

LGBT issues are not yet so important in the electoral campaign and from the European point of view not so visible. But they are such for both American electors and both camps of Republicans and Democrats, considering the decision of the Supreme Court, which recently recognized the constitutional right to same-sex marriage, and therefore the overall attitude of the public towards the issue has significantly been shifted.

Despite still unclear definitive final selection of the candidates on both sides, few of them have already expressed their positions to this issue.

Hillary Clinton, as the most serious Democratic candidate for the presidential position, expressed her standpoint at the October meeting of the human rights prominent non-governmental organization "Human Rights Campaign". She did confirm that this was that institution which had changed her view on human rights, and promised to devote the most attention to them in her campaign. As well as she gave her support to the Federal Equality Act or reminded of paying attention the transgender rights and, naturally, did not fail to support same-sex marriages.

It should, however, be noted that she is the only politically experienced in this issue. Even as the First lady, wife of President Clinton, got more visible on the visit to China in 1995 because of her phrase "women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights". As Secretary of the State she pushed human rights to the priority of foreign policy proved for example when one of the first steps of hers in this position was the country's accession to the UN Council for Human Rights, avoided by the previous administration.

As might be expected, most of the Republican candidates are not only opposing the same-sex marriage, but several of them are also opponents of discrimination and of creating the specially protected social class - sexual orientation - to civil rights. In this respect, eccentric Donald Trump is an exception for this case, whose position is clear-cut against the same-sex marriage, but he relatively consistently claims that the 1964 Civil Rights Act should be amended to include thus an element protecting people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation. Nevertheless, his attacks against other topics related to the human rights issues as migration topic or sexual harassment against women are not relevant for political decision-making, they are more the populist unexpected element in the American electoral campaign.

But what really both camps miss yet is a greater support for equal rights for women and men, being formed for longer time in Europe, for example the quotas debates. There are still a few public debates expected during which deeper views of individual candidates will be increasingly formed to finally enable an ultimate choice of the Republicans and Democrats. However, it is clear that the some support groups as well as individual citizens do know which of the opinions and beliefs on human rights stay not to be changed anymore.

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Dinah Shelton, ed. (2013). *The Oxford Handbook of International Human Rights Law*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

The book gave me a deep impression that it is not enough to read one time, rather I would suggest others to work with it, as it may change the reader's perspective toward international legal system. It is much enjoyable, as the author, a prize-winner by her three famous works in Human Rights field, made her work even more comprehensive for readers, as it was dedicated and worth of reading for everyone. Perhaps, author wanted to keep the work as a handbook, although it sounds very modest for this work. In my personal opinion, this book provides an opportunity for young scholars who are stressing to understand the background of theories of international law, while it has been challenged in modern law. The work became even more reach, as it included contributions of many different experienced, young scholars. I would not suggest the book for those people who are starting to have an interest in international human rights, rather the book is excellent to read with full of prepared questions with yourself, as it structurally leads every part with algorithm, as if it makes it even more logical to work with. The author's attempt to identify the origin and the first occurrence of human rights and, furthermore, to explain the evolution of human rights aligning it with the history of world, is remarkable. Dinah Shelton argues in introduction that evolution of human rights produced many unanswered questions, thus her work is limited by only those matters, which requires a higher degree of attention. The handbook included itself critical questions such as, why do humans have rights? What is the main source of human rights? Are they universal? What are the origins? Which type of institutions and methods seem to be

the most optimal choice to guarantee the compliance and enforcement of rights? Do human rights make a difference in our lives? And how we can feel and measure the differences? Based on author's argument, the book also focuses to find the exact nuance between readers, who are introduced for the first time, and for more experienced readers, as it was designed to be a readable work for both groups.

The book is accurately structured by seven parts. The beginning is dedicated to the foundations of human rights, by analyzing the origin from theological perspective. Furthermore, it targets other areas, such as moral philosophy, biological and psychological foundations of human rights, sociology and anthropology of human rights. The second part concentrates on historical and legal sources, which contains seven chapters. It argues that all ideas, premises, and principles of human rights do not have only one geographical origin, rather it has been emerging from many different "channels". It also emphasizes the first emergence of non-governmental and international organizations, social justice, diplomatic and humanitarian law as a source of human rights, and the rights of minorities. Aftermath, it examines the cardinal and structural principles of human rights, such as the function of equality, solidarity, human dignity, and linkage between democracy, rule of law and human rights, the impacts of state's subsidiarity and sovereignty on human rights and the principle of proportionality. The fourth part studies the procedures of human-rights law making process and its crucial assumptions. Moreover, it explains the core obligations, the positivity and negativity of obligations, *jus cogens* and *Erga Omnes*, as an outcome of normative evolution of human rights. Information contained in the next chapters are familiar to majority of people, yet it is well-written part, as I would suggest to be a compul-

sory for students. It includes various institutions and actors, and their roles in international legal framework. The section also managed to discuss about the legal framework in regional and national system. The book questions the universality of regional system, while defining the roles and impacts of non-state actors and treaty bodies. It is continued by a section, which deals with interpreting human rights treaties, examining the question capacity of their immunity and jurisdiction. Author, in this section, discusses the specificity of human rights, as it protects the rights of groups and individuals rather than concerning with states. It also highlights the idea how to enforce human rights using economic sanctions, and how to use the force of international law, in order to avoid atrocities, which the field vastly chooses from humanitarian intervention to the responsibility to protect. The last part suggests assessments compliance, the result for victims, and significant indicators on applying and creating human rights. At the end, author tends to show that human right does make a difference in our lives, making Latina America as a prior example.

One of the highlighting impressions from this book for me was that editors tried to make this work very comprehensive, keeping the writing manner in informative level, as it gives a reader a personal space to navigate its own perspective to observe the law. The comprehensiveness of this book provides a chance for young scholars to understand the fundamental principles of Human Rights, as it dedicated its two parts to examine the history and origins of human rights. Most importantly, the value of the book is the fact that it would leave the reader with satisfaction of given information and the "taste" to continue studying this field.

Enerelt ENKHTUYA,
student: European Studies, 2mES

5 Human Rights News

Let us Introduce you Boris – a New Member of the UNESCO Chair

A new member of our UNESCO Chair for Human Rights Education is Boris Valach, an internal postgraduate student of European studies and policies programme at the FSES CU. In this article, we would love to present him to you and unveil some information of his academic and private life. Therefore, sit back and spend some time on a couple of lines that Boris shared with us.

First of all, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Boris Valach and just recently, I celebrated my 26th birthday. Currently, I am a postgraduate student at the Institute of European Studies and International Relations at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at the Comenius University in Bratislava. Besides that, I am also an editor of a bilingual magazine The Human Rights News, yeah, the one that you are holding in your hands now.

In order to give you, at least, a rough picture of the above-mentioned studies, let me briefly mention the topic of my dissertation thesis. In my thesis, I have been dealing



with questions that concern international trade related to the human rights protection, enshrined in the EU trade agreements with the third countries. My thesis should bring an answer to the question about the mutual relations between two priorities of the Union – the international trade and a commitment to human rights compliance. Regarding my other activities at our institute, the following academic year, I would like to open a course that would focus on the issues of the international trade regarding the EU's Common Commercial Policy. If you find the area of the world economy intriguing, you are more than welcome to join it, once it is actual.

The already mentioned postgraduate study at our faculty I advance with a parallel external studying of International Trade at the Faculty of Business Management at the University of Economics in Bratislava. The mentioned study program gives me an insight to the EU activities in the commercial sector from a different perspective. It also helps me to complement the theoretical mosaic that is inevitable for the dissertation thesis creation. My ambition is to interconnect the focus of both of these qualification works. Referring back to the International Trade, I have to admit that this study program puts great emphasis mainly on its practical use in real situations, as well as on displaying the global economic development as such. In case none of the education fields of study at our university grabs your attention, and you are still pondering what direction to move, in terms of opting for the right university study, I would highly recommend this one to you. As I am just about to face the first exam period, perhaps, I should not to be so optimistic yet. Who knows, maybe I will have to issue some amendments around my statement later on. 😊

In order not to remain purely in academic terms, I would like to mention a few of my non-university activities and interests, too. Besides the political and public happening, I devote my time to something that helps me, let me say “clear up my mind” and keep me fit. Not only mentally but also physically. It's bodybuilding. I have been working out for several years and what I learnt from it can be perfectly applied to college or every-day life. It is mainly self-discipline and ability to set your time management properly. Apart from the bodybuilding, that is, perhaps, the greatest hobby of mine, I also like hiking, learning foreign languages (In the summer I will take an advantage from a premium scholarship that I was rewarded with and will spend some lovely time exploring the beauty of Germany at the Goethe Institute of the German Language. Have to admit, I am already pretty excited about it.) and I would surely not reject any traveling related ideas. As an example, let me mention my travels across Europe that I have done multiple times with my buddies. All that adventure we came across was just incredible. We experienced the counties from a totally different perspective like regular tourists do.



6 Reports

First Simulation of the United Nations Meetings in the Slovakia, at Comenius University in Bratislava

One and a half year had lasted preparation of the first Simulation of UN meetings at the university level in the Slovakia – SlovakMUN 2015. The whole project was under the guarantee of the Comenius University in Bratislava in cooperation with the European Law Students Association (ELSA) Bratislava. Within the Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences had co-operated.

The conference held place from 4th to 8th November 2015, where approximately one hundred students from different European as well non-European countries had cooperated. There were present also Slovak students, supporting individual teams.

UN simulations are regularly organised in different countries all over the world, also in Slovak neighbouring countries with long-lasting tradition. On annual basis there are organised MUN conferences in Prague (Czech Republic) or in Vienna (Austria). SlovakMUN 2015 has ambition to become successful project, when this first year was organised under the auspicious of h.e. Andrej Kiska, the president of the Slovak Republic. Many different partners had contributed on different level of cooperation and support. We receive very positive evaluation from participants.

I personally consider as the most important issue the fact, that delegates were able to become familiar with the agenda and become more interested in the work of UN across the simulation meetings. We have had a really great group of students - participants had already contacted us again to come to the next UN ses-



sion in Prague, where I am going to participate as well. UN conferences have a strong power to connect young students with the same interest to learn and train in UN agenda, use the university theoretical knowledge in practice.

For us, organisational team, the work is not finished, but the new already started. We are preparing for 2016 Slovak MUN and hope, that the next one will be better than previous.

Clarissa do Nascimento Tabosa student, European Studies 2mES member of the Organisation team



SLOVAK COMMISSION FOR UNESCO – ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Slovak Commission for UNESCO is organising in relation to 70 anniversary of UN conference, which take place on 24 November 2015 at 15.00 in the Aula of Comenius University in Bratislava, Šafárikovo sq. 6

Everyone is warmly welcome

More info: www.mzv.sk



RESEARCH SEMINAR AT THE INSTITUTE OF EUROPEAN STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

At the Institute of European Studies and International Relations (IESIR), there will be within the regular scheme of research seminar, invited lecture and following discussion on „The Politics of Foreign Aid in Central and Eastern Europe“, by **Dr. Simon LIGHTFOOT** from University of Leeds.

Seminar will held place on 16 November 2015 at 14.00 in the meeting room of IESIR (room No. B132), Mlynské luhy 4, Bratislava.

More info: www.fses.uniba.sk



HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMAN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

On occasion of International Human Rights Day, on 10 December 2015, there will be organised 4th international workshop focused on agenda of human rights at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences of Comenius University in Bratislava. Concrete topics presented and discussed are connected with human security and development cooperation:

- Security-development nexus
- Humanitarian aid
- Sustainable development goals
- Development activities- neocolonialism?
- Inter-organizational cooperation
- International organizations missions and goals on these issues
- Transnational justice
- Human security- water and food security
- International and European Union law responsibilities

Abstract with the application should be send by email to workshop@fses.uniba.sk by 15 November at the latest. Final paperwork should be submitted by 15 December 2015, in English language.

Workshop is organised within the implementation of project Human Rights News.

More info: www.fses.uniba.sk



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A EURÓPSKYCH ZÁLEŽITOSTÍ
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