



Strengthening human rights for fighting inequalities and building back better

Note: This is a summary of the written submission prepared by the South Centre* for the Third Intersessional Meeting for Dialogue and Cooperation on Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global crisis without precedent in modern history. Its effects have not been felt equally among all countries as it has exacerbated the profound economic and social inequalities affecting the most vulnerable. In light of the lessons, we have learned - and are still learning - from the fight against COVID-19 pandemic, the 3rd Intersessional Meeting for Dialogue and Cooperation on Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda serves as a vital opportunity to understand the needs and realities of those who are still 'left behind'.

Developing countries efforts in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic have shown the need for strengthening public policies directed towards guaranteeing public investment in social and health infrastructure, human talent and capacities to promote a more equal and fair redistribution of wealth among society and permanently guaranteeing peoples' wellbeing and freedom. Therefore, austerity measures, the redirection of public funds for the payment of foreign debt or investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS) costs and compensations, and the establishment of unilateral coercive measures should be avoided.

Similarly, public-private partnerships guided by strong principles of transparency, public participation and oversight could support the transfer of technology, skills and knowledge for building back better for the future, including by ensuring autonomy in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals. In order to attain such objectives, the adoption of a legally binding instrument on business and human rights and promoting the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles, should be emphasized as means to guarantee adequate measures for the prevention, mitigation and remediation of human rights abuses.

Finally, comprehensive and coordinated public policies adopted towards the improvement of human conditions, and to a broader understanding of development for the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of all human rights is indispensable for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The catalytic role of South-South cooperation should be particularly enhanced towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and international solidarity and cooperation to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and building back better and fairer after the COVID-19 crisis.

* The South Centre is the intergovernmental organization comprised of 54 developing country Members coming from all the regions of the Global South. The Centre supports developing countries to combine their efforts and expertise to promote their common interests in the international arena.