

The Secretary General's UN reform - supported by the General Assembly - is by most standards the most ambitious since the modern UN was established.

In a nutshell, the aim Secretary General's reform is to create a more effective United Nations underpinning

“ a global response that addresses the root causes of conflict, and integrates peace, sustainable development and human rights in a holistic way – from conception to execution.”

In substance, human rights underpin the SDGs - and a fundamental human rights principle of nondiscrimination and equality - is captured in the sentence “leave no one behind”.

The SDGs constitute a framework for action and provide a new opportunity to operationalize the human rights conventions and instruments at all levels and for all actors.

Moreover, goal 17 reminds us that it is through collaboration and openness that we really achieve great things for humanity.

Accepting the SDGs as a global language - give us a set of global standards progress and impact - and confront the lack of real action in the area of human rights.

It is with these goals in mind that we are 18 months into a UN reform that adapt the United Nations - as a system - to support the global transition to sustainable development and promoting human rights not only for now but also for future generations.

The instruments of reform are both managerial and substantive so the UN can more effectively organize its analysis and support to the SDG agenda.

In practical terms, significant structural changes have taken place to improve efficiencies, make the peace and security pillar less fragmented and repositioned the Resident Coordinator system with the UN - so the function has now become full time and more strategic.

Decentralization, mutual recognition of business processes and openness - all key features of the reform - all aim to allow for the UN to organize itself to respond so multi-dimensional issues such as youth unemployment, gender equality, climate change or biodiversity loss.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General has committed to achieve gender balance throughout the organization emphasizing that gender equality is a sine qua non for sustainable development and an indispensable outcome of it.

In addition, the new country-level UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework - is a strong planning instrument to organize an effective UN response to human rights needs and challenges within an overall SDG Framing.

With some seminal work done by the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner lead by Kate Gilmore and the Danish Institute for Human rights - there are now publicly available analytical platforms that directly link Human rights Conventions with the framework consisting of the Sustainable Development Goals, sub goals and indicators.

This new analytical capacity will have a very positive impact in two important areas. Firstly it will be able to infuse the Universal Period Review with new analytical content that all parties can access and review.

Secondly, combining the UPR with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework - will give the UN country teams a more effective platform for promoting human rights.

Furthermore, given the SDG indicators speak directly to specific human rights - more traditional reviews can be supplemented by the use of data and indicators for human rights progress - and open up for broader assessment of the impact of interventions and reported progress.

This level of ambition requires an activist UN - a UN that is open for new partnerships, for innovation and an acceptance that we increasingly need to talk about the “results of our results” as way of being more accountable for global progress on the SDGs and thereby on the specific human rights we all see as central to human progress.

To support leadership an SDG primer has been recently released with the aim to establish a common base of understanding and approach for the UN system in supporting the 2030 Agenda. It is primarily meant to inform - in broad terms - the programmes and actions of all UN entities, including in their engagement with government and civil society partners.

It will be made available first to RCs and UNCT members, and then to all others.

Before closing, I would like to highlight two things:

Firstly, concurrent with the UN reform as presented to the General Assembly, a number of important decisions accelerating reform have been made by the UN’s internal systemwide coordination mechanisms viz. the UN Sustainable Development Group, the High-Level Committee of Management and the Chief Executive Board itself. They pertain to the common standards for data, data usage and privacy along with systematic use of the Sustainable Development Goals in UN analysis. When implemented I see these creating new opportunities to bring human rights, the principle of leaving no one behind and the SDGs closer together.

Secondly, a UN reform focusing on making the United Nations more effective and responsive to the needs of member states transitioning to sustainable development - is also a UN that communicate the rights of

future generations. Not only does this topic show up forcefully in the Climate Crisis - but also in the way the SDGs set goals and targets for reducing inequality.

In closing, let me say that the core of the reform is to significantly lift the capacity of the United Nations System in meeting both the requirements and the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda and thereby also increasing the United Nations' relevance and capacity to promote human rights globally.