

Local solutions to global challenges: Role of civic participation in advancing human rights and development

(Side event at the 39th session of the HRC organized by the Permanent Mission of Mongolia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)

16.30-18.00, Friday, 14 September 2018, room XXV, Palais des Nations

The 2030 Development Agenda is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is informed by the Declaration on the Right to Development. The Universal Declaration, which celebrates its 70th Anniversary this year, recognizes in Article 25 (1) that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family. The Right to Development makes development a basic human right, and calls for active, free and meaningful participation in development and fair distribution of its benefits for all people. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognizes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.

Having access to safe drinking water and sanitation is central to living a life in dignity and upholding human rights. The rights to water and sanitation require that these are available, accessible, safe, acceptable and affordable for all without discrimination. They require a focus on the most disadvantaged and marginalized, and an emphasis on participation, empowerment, accountability and transparency. SDG 6 aspires to ‘ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all’. In particular, Target 6.2 aims - by 2030, to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

Like many other countries around the globe, Mongolia, a Landlocked Developing Country (LLDC) in North-East Asia, faces several contemporary global challenges – among them, environmental degradation, desertification, water pollution, poverty and related threats to the lives, livelihoods and health of its people. In this context, “Local Solutions” NGO founded in Mongolia in 2007, engages in identifying, encouraging and disseminating local solutions for resolving local problems that are endemic to the country, or are local expressions of emerging global challenges. Its project “Let’s Change Our Toilets” cuts across several intersecting issues including human rights and development, water and sanitation, health, finance and local community engagement. As envisioned in the Right to Development Declaration, this civil society initiative supports the empowerment of local communities, especially women and youth, in order to enable them to identify their problems, understand the global importance of their circumstances, and solve the challenges they face with available resources. Capacity building through public education is used to help people to help themselves, and to make a difference.

The side event aims to discuss this initiative and its relevance to sustainable development, in the broader context of realizing rights through free, active and meaningful participation and expanding civic space. This event will provide an opportunity for change-makers at the local level to share their stories with a global audience to support a global dialogue.

Objectives

- To discuss how people’s free, active and meaningful participation and expanding civic space help realize rights and support sustainable development
- To illustrate how local community initiatives such as ‘Local Solutions to Global Challenges’ integrate and implement human rights and principles of the Declaration on the Right to Development
- To support dialogue and sharing of good practices among local change-makers, make the links with human rights and development and encourage global cooperation

Introductory remarks: Ambassador Mr. Lundeg Purevsuren, Permanent Representative of Mongolia

Moderator: Ms. Shyami Puvimanasinghe, Human Rights Officer, OHCHR

Speakers:

- Mr. Saad Alfarargi, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development
- Mr. Léo Heller, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation
- Ms. Tsedevdamba Oyungerel, Chair of Board, “Local Solutions” NGO, Mongolia



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF
MONGOLIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER