**INPUTS OF NHRC, INDIA**

**3rd Inter-Sessional Meeting of UNHRC & 2030 SDG Agenda**

At the core of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 associated targets, of which India became a signatory in 2015. The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) [Resolution 43/19](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/43/19) on the promotion and protection of human rights and implementing the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda)calls for three half-day inter-sessional meetings for dialogue & cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to be held in the years 2021, 2022 and 2023.

The theme for the first inter-sessional meeting to be held on January 14, 2021, "Building back better: Integrating human rights in sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic," provides the member states an opportune time to discuss reducing inequalities, as embodied in SDG 10 and peace, strong institutions, justice, and gender, as expressed in SDG 16. India, as a member state, has always played a proactive role in shaping the SDGs. The country is committed to inclusive and human rights-based sustainable development. The slogan associated with the SDGs, "Leave no one behind," bears resonance to the Indian government's phrase, "sabkasaath, sabkavikas" (collective effort, inclusive development).

The world is grappling with a pandemic with such challenging dimensions as never seen before. Covid-19 pandemic, even though slowed down the Indian government's efforts to provide an inclusive and rights-based development to the country's people but faced with this herculean task, the government has changed its tactics and brought relief to the people. The government introduced various safety net packages for the most vulnerable sections of the society like the Prime Minister's Garib Kalyan Yojana, the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (food scheme), which covered nearly two-thirds of the population, the PM Kisan Scheme whereby farmers of the country receive Rs. 6000/- every year, which benefits almost 86.9 million farmers. MNREGA workers saw an increase in their wages from Rs. 182 to 202. Women Jan Dhan account holders are being given an ex-gratia amount of Rs. 500 per month to run their households, and women coming from below poverty line families, covered under the Ujjwala Scheme were provided free LPG cylinders for three months. The list doesn't end here, but it bears evidence of India's commitment to SDGs and recovery in times of Covid-19.

The National Human Rights Commission of India is mandated to protect and promote the human rights of all under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. A "Committee of Experts on Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Human Rights and Future Response" comprising domain experts, civil society representatives and ministries and other departments, was formed by the Commission to assess the impact of the pandemic on the realization of the rights of the people, especially the marginalized/vulnerable sections of the population.

The Commission issued Human Rights Covid-19 to state governments in alignment with WHO and M/o Health and Family Welfare and ICMR guidelines.The Commission created new incident categories in different nature of Complaints for Violation of Human Rights related to Covid-19. A series of advisories on different themes were formulated by the Commission, which were then shared with Ministries/departments at the Union government level and across all States & Union Territories.

The advisories included: Human Rights of Informal Workers, Advisory on Right to Health, Advisory on Right to Food Security and Nutrition, Advisory on Rights of Person with Disability, Advisory on the Rights of Women, Impact of Covid-19 on Human Rights & Future Response: Advisory on the Rights of the Prisoners, Impact of Covid-19 on Human Rights & Future Response: Advisory on the Rights of the Police Personnel, Combating Human Trafficking, Rights of Elderly Persons, for Protection of the Rights of LGBTQI+ Community Women, Right to Mental Health, Protection of the Rights of Children, Businesses & Human Rights and Future Response in the context of Covid-19 were tirelessly formulated by the Commission.

**Way Forward:**

As we are faced with unprecedented times, the National Human Rights Commission's role in protecting the Human Rights of all in the country has become more enhanced. The NHRC has been taking suo moto cognizance of matters requiring urgent attention and will continue to uphold the Human rights of the country's people.Recently on January 1, 2021, NHRC, India sends *suo motu* notice to the Ministry of External Affairs & Shipping Ministry, Government of India on stranded sailors in Chinese ports (carrying coals from Australia and onboard MV Anastasia and MV Jag Anand in Chinese waters for over 146 days and their difficultieswithout any rescuemission insight). The arrival of these ships coincided with an escalating altercation between China and Australia. The MEA responded,"pursuing cases with Chinese officials."

The SDG slogan, "Leave no one behind," so in that spirit, it would be our effort to promote universal access to health care along with economic, social, and environmental security. We are at a transformative juncture where development has to be far-sighted, all-encompassing, and more rights-based. In this context, the SDG Agenda 2020 should be a reference point from where the world should build back an inclusive society with no discrimination, where we transform the gendered inequalities and our governance systems absorb the vulnerability to shocks. A central dimesion of build back is to have a people centric recovery that focuses on well-being, inclusiveness and reduce inequality.

NHRIs will have to step in with more enthusiasm once the effects of immediate relief measures provided by the governments worldwide start to wane off, and the more long-lasting vulnerabilities continue to persist.

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