

Shifts across our pillars to increase our relevance

OHCHR *shifts* are more focused thematic human rights challenges that are addressed within each *pillar*. One of the shifts is composed of four *Frontier issues*. *Frontier issues* are emerging concerns selected by OHCHR because their impact on human rights needs to be better understood.

Inequality



Upholding human rights will greatly reduce inequalities of all kinds. Mounting economic and social inequalities, fuelled by regressive economic models and a generation of underfunding of public services, underscore the urgent need to curb discrimination and expand fiscal space to increase investment in essential social services. The response to Covid-19, Leave No One Behind, and OHCHR’s Surge Initiative are mutually-reinforcing work areas that place human rights at the centre of economic policymaking and focus on protecting and increasing the meaningful participation of marginalized groups, strengthening the fulfilment of economic and social rights, and creating conditions in which inequalities can be reduced. The immediate aim of the *shift* on inequality is to support building back better; *Our Common Agenda* states that destabilizing inequalities must be overcome to realize humanity’s hopes of breaking through to a greener, better, safer future.

Global constituency for human rights



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In *Our Common Agenda*, the Secretary-General says that trust is the foundation of a renewed social contract anchored in human rights. Trust in people, institutions and society prospers where human rights are protected, respected and fulfilled. Trust springs from listening to and speaking with diverse constituencies, and in particular from dialogues that promote understanding of human rights and demonstrate their tangible contributions to sustainable development, peace and security and the everyday lives of individuals. OHCHR is committed to cultivating a global constituency that will not only stand up for the promise of human rights, but participate in defining our renewed social contract.

Leveraging data for human rights



The data revolution has the potential to improve human rights analysis and monitoring and strengthen support for sustainable development and prevention efforts. As a producer, recipient and user of massive amounts of human rights data, OHCHR can lead data-driven advocacy across the UN and contribute to international, regional and national action to protect and advance human rights through better collection, analysis and dissemination of data on human rights issues and situations. In addition, such data can support the call in *Our Common Agenda* for evidence and fact-based science and knowledge, which are essential to end the 'infodemic' that plagues our world. OHCHR can also guide the efforts of States and the UN System to ensure that data collection and management fully respect human rights principles and standards, thereby mitigating the possible negative impacts of the data revolution on rights, including privacy and security.

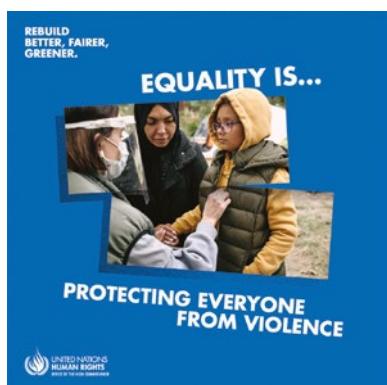
Protect and expand civic space



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Public participation, freedom of expression, access to information, freedoms of association and assembly: these and other dimensions of civil society and civic space ensure that humanity, individually and collectively, can stand up for all human rights everywhere. They also intertwine to support the three foundations for a renewed social contract described in *Our Common Agenda*: (a) trust; (b) inclusion, protection and participation; and (c) measuring and valuing what matters to people and the planet. OHCHR's efforts to protect and expand civic space remain constant, informed by *Our Common Agenda* and OHCHR's responsibilities as custodian of SDG Indicator 16.10.1.

Prevention of conflict, violence and insecurity



The Secretary-General has called the international human rights system the ‘best prevention tool we have’ and a ‘critical foundation’ for sustaining peace. OHCHR will continue to deliver human rights information for early warning and risk analysis, demonstrate how respect for human rights contributes to conflict prevention, and build a culture of prevention that is informed by human rights, in particular through the recommendations of human rights mechanisms.

Frontier issue: Climate change



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The impacts of climate change on human rights are underlined in the 2030 Agenda and prioritized by the Secretary-General in *Our Common Agenda* and the *Call to Action for*

Human Rights. Climate change is increasingly central to OHCHR’s work. Beyond threats to rights to water and sanitation, housing, food, health and development, the rise in attacks against environmental human rights defenders demands swift and comprehensive protection measures. In addition, human rights-based approaches to climate change have the potential to increase resilience, and strengthen crisis preparedness and contingency planning.

Frontier issue: Corruption



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Difficulties in acquiring, distributing and accessing Covid-19 vaccines have confirmed the corrosive effects of corruption on human rights. Similar effects undermine confidence in governance, judiciaries and electoral systems and access to health, education, water and sanitation and other basic services. *Our Common Agenda* noted that the decay in trust undermines the social contract, but also that corruption has a disproportionate impact on women. Consistently raised as a concern by the human rights mechanisms, ending corruption is a pre-condition of the enjoyment, by all, of all human rights.

Frontier issue:
**Digital space and
 emerging technologies**



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The global pandemic has redirected much human interaction to the digital space and increased our reliance on emerging technologies. Their potential for positive change and their extraordinary reach continue to astound humanity. Nevertheless, core concerns remain, about artificial intelligence, threats to privacy and freedom of expression, and the dangers posed by surveillance, hate speech, discrimination, violence and exploitation (including of children) and sexual violence. *Our Common Agenda* calls for concerted efforts to improve digital cooperation, including through a Global Digital Compact. OHCHR will initially assist technology companies and others to apply the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to the digital space and emerging technologies.

Frontier issue:
People on the move



To deliver on Agenda 2030's guiding principle to Leave No One Behind, it will be necessary to protect the human rights of all migrants more effectively, irrespective of where they are or how or why they are on they move. The need to ensure that migrants can access Covid-19 treatments and vaccines underlines the urgency of the challenge. OHCHR continues to work to support implementation of the commitments made in the Global Compact on Migration.

Shining a spotlight on women, young people, persons with disabilities and people of African descent



Women react after Colombia's constitutional court voted to decriminalize abortion in Bogota, Colombia, February 2022. © REUTERS/Luisa Gonzalez

In addition to maintaining its commitment to combat discrimination on any and all grounds, OHCHR's *Spotlight populations* focus on the human rights of particular groups and contributes to Agenda 2030's guiding principle of Leave No One Behind.



Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities continue to experience high levels of discrimination in a wide range of settings, notably in their access to employment, access to health and education services, and participation in public life. The launch of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and OHCHR's Disability Strategy indicators and targets for 2022-2023 are initial elements of a response. OHCHR will continue to work

actively for the effective promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.



Women

The global pandemic imperils progress on gender inequality. Women comprise 70% of the health workforce and are more likely to be frontline health workers. They experience higher levels of violence, especially in the context of lockdowns, are more likely to lose their jobs, and do more unpaid labour. These impacts

compound the discrimination and violence that already affected women. In this new context, women's rights must be re-prioritized, and a new commitment made at global, regional, national and local level to respect, protect and fulfil all rights for all women.



Young people

Our Common Agenda puts young people at the centre of humanity's choice to breakdown or breakthrough. They stand at the nexus of solidarity: the generation that is most directly affected by today's decisions is most obviously in solidarity with future generations, because it will be responsible for bequeathing a liveable

world to those who follow. While young people are a source of immense hope and potential, as constructive agents of change for human rights, today they experience many challenges to enjoyment of their human rights. This is especially true of those whose lives are marked by poverty, discrimination, violence, lack of education, or lack of opportunities. By listening to young people and developing their understanding of human rights, OHCHR works to ensure that young people everywhere enjoy and stand up for human rights – now and in the future.



People of African descent

The High Commissioner's leadership role in implementing the Four-Point Agenda Towards Transformative Change for Racial Justice and Equality requires that OHCHR build on its longstanding work to combat the racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance faced by people of African descent. This responds not only to global demands to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of people of African descent but to essential commitments made in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. In 2022, two new mechanisms – the international independent expert mechanism to advance racial justice and equality in law enforcement, and the Permanent Forum on People of African descent - will further strengthen the UN's human rights anti-racism architecture, which includes the Working Group of Experts on People of African descent, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Racism, supported by the International Decade for People of African descent.



« I want to live ». Photo taken during a Black Lives matter protest in Paris.
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