

Check against delivery

Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Interactive Dialogue: “Tackling inequalities, empowering women and girls and leaving no one behind””

Time: Wednesday, 25 September, 15:00 to 18:00p.m.

Venue: Trusteeship Council Chamber, UNHQ, New York

“An Agenda for Equality”

Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



**UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER**

Excellencies,

Inequalities and discrimination are the defining challenge of our time.

It is an intolerable fact of our age that the 85 richest people in the world own as much as the poorest 3.5 billion people put together.

Discrimination, including gender discrimination, continues to blight the lives of millions of our fellow human beings, with many groups completely excluded from development - such as migrants without legal status, or children with disabilities who are excluded from school.

Extreme inequalities are divisive and socially corrosive. They breed economic instability, social unrest and sometimes violent conflict. If we do nothing to address them, sustainable development will never be achieved.

There are many different kinds of inequalities that we need to address if we are to succeed.

These include horizontal inequalities between social, ethnic or other population groups, which themselves result from persistent patterns of discrimination, unequal rights, and historical disadvantage.

There are also vertical inequalities, including extreme income inequalities, such as gross wage differences between the CEO and the workers – differences that must be regulated if markets are to serve the interests of human welfare.

And global inequalities between countries, a result of many inequities in our system of global governance, which are often skewed in favour the more powerful countries – contrary to the ambitions of the UN Charter.

The 2030 Agenda is a powerful framework, and its implementation will address all these inequalities.

The human rights promise of equality and non-discrimination is at its heart, and every SDG includes practical steps to promote greater equality, including dedicated goals on gender equality and reducing inequalities within and between countries.

Monitoring data that is disaggregated along multiple axes of discrimination will help ensure that no one is being left behind.

And robust review must ensure accountability of governments and other actors, including the private sector, for meeting this imperative.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Addressing inequalities and discrimination is not simply a practical necessity - it is a binding duty. Member States have already committed to equality and non-discrimination for all under human rights law.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” and the Declaration on the Right to Development calls for more equitable development – at national and international levels.

This imperative is thus at the heart of the new Agenda, and we must recognize it for what it is – an ‘Agenda for Equality’.

Thank you.