

NEWSLETTER

of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order



Issue No. 4– November 2021

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I hope this message finds you and your loved ones well in these continuously challenging times.

I am pleased to share with you my fourth newsletter which contains information on the above issues.

I thank you for your support to my mandate and welcome further opportunities to engage with you with a view to achieving a democratic and equitable international order.

Warm regards,

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana

UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a

MESSAGE

FROM THE

*UN INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON THE
PROMOTION OF A DEMOCRATIC AND EQUITABLE
INTERNATIONAL ORDER.*



Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana (DEIO)

ACTIVITIES HELD: JUNE—SEPTEMBER, 2021

During the reporting period, the entirety of which was marked by travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Independent Expert participated in a number of events, including the following:

Webinar on the impact of unilateral coercive measures on national health systems of targeted developing countries—3 June 2021

Acting as moderator for a webinar on the impact of unilateral coercive measures on national health systems of targeted developing countries, in particular on the health and well-being of women, children, persons with disabilities and other people in vulnerable situations, which was jointly organized by the Permanent Missions of Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zimbabwe to the United Nations in New York, held on 3 June 2021;

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ACTIVITIES HELD: JUNE—SEPTEMBER 2021

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Side event on special procedures speaking with one voice, pertaining to human rights experts and collective action and statements— 22 June 2021

An online side event on special procedures speaking with one voice, pertaining to human rights experts and collective action and statements, which was held on 22 June 2021 on the margins of the Forty-Seventh session of the Human Rights Council, bringing together many experts to speak about their efforts to articulate profound human rights concerns collectively, to address progress and benchmarking on the collective calls they have made to observe human rights in specific contexts or situations, and to focus attention on the issues they have raised collectively and their achievements.

Workshop on United Nations mandate holders on human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals— 2 July 2021

An online workshop on United Nations mandate holders on human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, which was held on 2 July 2021 and was organized by (i) the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, (ii) the Sustainable Development Goal Advocate for the Secretary-General and President of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and (iii) the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, to explore ways to strengthen the inherent bonds and mutual support of the sustainable development and human rights communities.

Consultation on ‘Solidarity, Equity and the Global COVID-19 Experience’, - 8 September 2021

An online consultation entitled ‘Solidarity, Equity and the Global COVID-19 Experience’, organized by the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) and held on 8 September 2021. The response to COVID-19—and in particular the distribution of countermeasures, such as vaccines— has been starkly unequal. Although solidarity has become a mantra, the global community has largely failed to take meaningful action, with nationalism, weak leadership and governance, the limitations of the multilateral system and systemic inequities to this failure. To better understand the systemic causes of these inequities, and chart a concrete, actionable path forward to improve equity and solidarity in the global health emergency ecosystem, the GPMB hosted a roundtable on Equity, Solidarity and the COVID-19 Experience, the findings of which will form the basis for the GPMB 2021 Report. Summary of the roundtable: [Summary-Solidarity-Equity-COVID1904cdf2f3-8509-418a-80e5-c9d04f3cd3df.pdf](https://www.gpmb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Summary-Solidarity-Equity-COVID1904cdf2f3-8509-418a-80e5-c9d04f3cd3df.pdf)

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Independent Expert presented his fourth thematic report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/48/58](#)) and the General Assembly ([A/76/153](#)) on 20 September and 22 October 2021 respectively on the **need for renewed multilateralism in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic**.

To prepare, in addition to extensive research and desk review, the Independent Expert issued a questionnaire to Member States, civil society and other stakeholders, and he consulted bilaterally with a number of stakeholders to seek their views on the topic at stake.

After **looking at the new impetus for multilateralism at the UN level, the Independent Expert examined how multilateralism is the sole path towards an equitable health response and fair socio-economic recovery, while making broader considerations on this matter**. More specifically, he scrutinized issues pertaining to, inter alia, equitable global access to vaccines; the need to strengthen WHO and the global health architecture; a possible international treaty for pandemic preparedness and response; the need to increase fiscal space for countries impacted by the pandemic; an overhaul of the global tax system; the establishment of a global fund for social protection; the introduction of an emergency universal basic income; the exacerbated impact of unilateral coercive measures; and a series of needed reforms of UN organs.



Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana and the H.E. Ms. Keva Lorraine Bain, Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the UN in Geneva, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council

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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY *continued from page 2*



Meeting with Mr. Jairo Rodriguez Hernandez, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva on the sidelines of the 48th session of the UN Human Rights Council, UN Chambers, Geneva, Switzerland.

The Independent Expert **paid tribute to the vital work of civil society actors in the context of the pandemic.** Under very difficult circumstances, they have been providing essential services, such as health care, food and shelter, to those in need, epitomizing the principles of resilience, solidarity and community that civil society so beautifully incarnates. They have also held their Governments accountable for their often inadequate health responses, monitored the use of emergency funding received from international financial institutions to combat corruption, and/or advocated for the full protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in this particular context, pushing back temporary, unduly restrictive emergency measures. As a result of their efforts, in many instances, civil society actors have been targeted, including through censorship, intimidation, threats, criminalization, arrests and detention. The Independent Expert **believes that civil society should be seen by national authorities and other stakeholders as a most valuable partner in the response to the pandemic.**

He raised concern on **the impact of the pandemic on the participation of civil society in multilateral processes and their funding.** He voiced support to the three institutional changes advocated by “We the Peoples” to make the United Nations more open, participatory and representative, with a view to ensuring that its responses both to the ongoing and to future global challenges are more effective, i.e. (1) **the appointment of a high-level United Nations civil society envoy;** (2) **the creation of a World Citizen’s Initiative mechanism;** and (3) **the creation of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly or World Parliamentary Assembly.**

The Independent Expert concluded that in this time of great upheaval, where the very concept of multilateralism is under significant threat, and with a virus that keeps mutating and does not stop at borders, **it is essential that renewed multilateralism be embraced, with a more effective and more inclusive approach, in order to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, with people and respect for human rights at the centre of this process.** Such an endeavour necessitates the global leadership and coordination of a robust and adequately funded United Nations, and the full commitment and sustained engagement of Member States, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society.

The momentum gathered within the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the World Health Assembly around the existential threat of the pandemic and the need to fully and unequivocally embrace multilateralism, international cooperation and solidarity as the sole way to defeat the pandemic should sustain and ultimately prevail.

Such an unwavering multilateral commitment is indeed needed to overcome other ongoing global challenges, first and foremost climate change, and to face future pandemics, possibly of a greater magnitude, which will undoubtedly come in the not-so-distant future.



Prof. Alfred de Zayas, Geneva Academy of Diplomacy presents his latest book ‘Building A Just World Order’, to Dr Livingstone Sewanyana at the UN Chambers, Geneva, Switzerland on 21st September, 2021

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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY *continued from page 3*

The pandemic presents an opportunity for the world to be better prepared next time and to build back better and more resilient, while achieving a democratic and equitable international order. It should be seized decisively.

The Independent Expert made a series of recommendations addressed to various stakeholders, i.e. Member States (in their individual capacity and as members of intergovernmental institutions and bodies), international financial institutions, and civil society.

To inform his reporting on this issue, the Independent Expert sought, **via a questionnaire**, the views from various stakeholders on the following three questions:

- What are the key obstacles to a more effective, inclusive and networked multilateralism to handle the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of both health response and economic recovery?
- What are the solutions to overcome such obstacles in a fair and sustainable manner (including targeted reforms)?
- What are your views on a new international treaty for pandemic preparedness and response?

The report and these submissions are available on the following **webpage**: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IntOrder/Pages/covid19-multilateralism.aspx>

Web story on the report “COVID-19 presents case for renewed multilateralism, says expert’s report”: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/MultilateralismAndCOVID19.aspx>

You can watch the webcasts here:

Human Rights Council:

1st part: [ID: IE on International Order - 12th Meeting, 48th Regular Session Human Rights Council | UN Web TV](#)

2nd part: [ID: IE on International Order \(Cont'd\) - 13th Meeting, 48th Regular Session Human Rights Council | UN Web TV](#)

General Assembly: [Third Committee, 25th meeting - General Assembly, 76th session | UN Web TV](#)

PRESS RELEASES AND COMMUNICATIONS

During the reporting cycle, the Independent Expert issued **15 communications and 14 press releases** jointly with fellow special procedure mandate holders. As in the previous reporting cycle, several of these press releases related to human rights challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can access the communications and the press releases here:

Press releases: https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/NewsSearch.aspx?MID=IE_Int_Order

Communications (select ‘international order’ mandate): <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>

COUNTRY VISITS

In September 2021, the Independent Expert issued a series of requests for country visits to the following countries:

Africa:	Asia:	Latin America	Middle East	Eastern Europe	Western Europe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethiopia • Ghana • Nigeria • South Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China • Fiji • India • Malaysia • Singapore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brazil • Chile • Cuba • Honduras 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bahrain • Lebanon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia • Russian Federation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • France • UK

SUBMITTING COMPLAINTS TO THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT

The Independent Expert welcomes **information from any individual, group of people, civil society organization, national human rights body or intergovernmental entity on threats to, and advances to a democratic and equitable international order**. Further information and guidelines for submissions can be found here:

<https://spsubmission.ohchr.org/en>

HOW TO CONTACT THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana
UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Email: ohchr-ie-internationalorder@un.org

Twitter: @Lsewanyana

Fax: + 41 22 917 9006