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**UNESCO and OHCHR jointly launch a call for the establishment of university chairs on the Human Rights Economy**

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) are joining efforts to create a set of OHCHR-UNESCO Chairs on the Human Rights Economy to amplify the work universities and their partner institutions around the concept of human rights economy, through knowledge production, provision of policy advice, capacity development and advocacy.

The establishment of OHCHR-UNESCO Chairs on Human Rights Economy will draw on the experience and existing infrastructure of the [UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme](https://www.unesco.org/en/unitwin) – a strategic resource of some 900 higher education institutions across 120 countries aimed at strengthening connections between research, development policy and practice at country, regional and global levels. The OHCHR-UNESCO Chairs established within the framework of this initiative will be included in the database of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks and will benefit from the activities and opportunities provided to the current members of the network.

Universities around the world are invited to submit an application for the establishment of a new chair **by 30 September 2023**. See below for more information on the application process.

**Context**

The failure to utilize economic, social, and cultural rights as effective policy guardrails in the economic and social sphere, has led to policy, investment and businesses decisions, as well as consumer choices, that have exacerbated the climate emergency, traded away labour and social rights, and contributed to the marginalisation of millions, resulting in an alarming increase in poverty and inequalities.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for a human rights economy that ‘will deliver better results for people and planet, because, beyond profit, it is grounded in everybody’s rights.’ This call resonates with UNESCO’s efforts to ensure the realization of human rights within its fields of competence, including the rights to education, to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, to take part in cultural life and other areas. In such a context, international cooperation, knowledge sharing, and intellectual solidarity are needed more than ever.

**THE HUMAN RIGHTS ECONOMY**

The human rights economy is simply properly applying pre-existing legal obligations to economic activity, as was intended by the [Universal Declaration on Human Rights](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights) and the treaties that followed it, including the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights) and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights).

A human rights economy centres people and the planet in economic, social, and environmental policies, plans and programmes and aims at ensuring that economic, industrial and trade policies, investment decisions, consumer protections and choices, as well as business models, are firmly guided by human rights norms and standards. It fosters participation and empowers groups subject to discrimination. It intentionally aims at eliminating discrimination and reducing inequalities by investing in economic, social, and other rights, and dismantling structural barriers and other impediments to equality, justice, sustainable growth and shared prosperity.

Human Rights Economy can be expressed via the following ten pathways:

1. Renewed commitment to realising economic, social and cultural rights.
2. Placing human rights as guardrails for fiscal policies.
3. Accelerating efforts on countering discrimination and inequalities.
4. Reinforcing human rights in economic policies, regulations and business operations.
5. Human Rights enhancing investments and trade policies.
6. Enshrining human rights at the core of industrial policies.
7. Investing in care and support systems anchored in human rights.
8. Reconciling economic growth with climate and environmental action.
9. Measuring economic success beyond GDP.
10. Fostering consumer and political participation and fiscal transparency.

More information on the concept of the human rights economy and the link to the webpage is available [here](https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2023/04/building-economies-place-peoples-human-rights-center).

**WHO CAN APPLY?**

Higher education institutions that are recognized, accredited or otherwise sanctioned by the competent national or local authorities.

Interested applicants are encouraged to consult the existing [UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs guidelines](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380998?posInSet=3&queryId=6cede24f-96f9-4ebb-8b1e-21087adb4165), which apply to this special initiative, except for the information otherwise specified in this call.

Note that this special initiative is limited to the establishment of OHCHR-UNESCO Chairs. Applications for UNITWIN networks will not be considered at this stage.

**HOW TO ACCESS THE ONLINE SUBMISSION PLATFORM?**

UNESCO and OHCHR are accepting applications to establish new OHCHR-UNESCO Chairs on Human Rights Economy between 25 August and 30 September 2023.

The application is to be completed in English or French through the dedicated submission platform and should be validated by the relevant National Commission for UNESCO.

1. **Register.** To receive an invitation, higher education institutions must register by completing an [Account Request Form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Uq5PHbM5-kuwswIpVrERlBabqaRo82ZHoyzVzRa9qP5UNDJaRUw4TVVPVjk4SEY2UlJETjA4Q0VIMS4u&wdLOR=c2DACB7CB-9627-4665-A4F4-BE0915F60100). In completing the form, indicate the contact information of the person at the proposed host institution who will prepare and submit the application.
2. **Receive access link to online platform.** An e-mail will be sent to the higher education institutions including the link that will enable access to the online submission platform (please also check the “Spam” folder). Once received, click on the link to access the online application form.
3. **Log in.** If the email address provided is already associated with a Microsoft account (i.e. @outlook.com, @hotmail.com, @live.com), enter the account information and password accordingly. Once authenticated, the user will be directed to the online submission platform.
4. **Complete the application and upload supporting documents.** The application can be filled out in part and saved for later completion (all information does not need to be entered during the same session).

For technical assistance while completing the online application form, please contact the UNITWIN Programme team at [unitwin@unesco.org](mailto:unitwin@unesco.org).

Applications by email will not be accepted.

**WHAT ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED?**

A complete application is supported by the following documents, to be uploaded before submission:

* A letter from the head of the higher education institution (e.g. President, Rector, Vice-Chancellor) proposing the establishment of an OHCHR-UNESCO Chair on Human Rights Economy
* A letter of support from the National Commission for UNESCO, or from the official United Nations representative in the case of applications from countries that are not Member States of UNESCO
* A letter of support from partner institution(s) indicating their commitment to the project
* The Curriculum Vitae of the proposed Chairholder(s) or Network Coordinator(s)

**REQUIRED CRITERIA**

SCOPE/FOCUS

* Contributes to further defining and operationalizing the human rights economy, which is linked to OHCHR priorities as outlined in the [UN Human Rights Management Plan 2022-2023,](https://www2.ohchr.org/english/OMP_22_23/) (*2024-2027 will be available next year)*  and to UNESCO priorities in the [Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2029)](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378083) and the [Approved Programme (2022-2025)](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380868).

APPROACH

* **Integrated approach:** Proposes an integrated multi-disciplinary approach reflected in the workplan that combines research, teaching/training, and community engagement.
* **Engagement with OHCHR, and UNESCO and its networks:** Demonstrates established partnerships, or plans to establish them, with OHCHR and UNESCO teams in-country, sub-regional, regional presence, expert groups at HQ; other UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks, UNESCO networks; and/or UNESCO Category II Centres, as well as other partners.
* **South-South and North-South-South cooperation:** Demonstrates South-South and North-South-South cooperation through inter-university networking and cooperation.

CAPACITY

* **Requisite expertise:** Demonstrated educational and relevant expertise of proposed Chairholder(s) or Coordinator(s) and team members in the thematic area(s) proposed above, preferably the key pathways, including capacity to generate high-quality publications.
* **Capacity for inter-university cooperation and networking**: Demonstrated capacity to collaborate with other higher education institutions, offer opportunities for academic mobility and student exchange, as well as to undertake knowledge sharing and dissemination activities.
* **Financial sustainability:** Adequate funding secured and/or plans to secure them for the activities foreseen in the 4-year plan.

Applications from higher education institutions in Africa and from Small Island Development States are encouraged.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

Please contact the UNITWIN Programme Coordinating team at [unitwin@unesco.org](mailto:unitwin@unesco.org)