



INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

"From Crisis to Opportunity: How to Build back Better?" by RightOn – 13 May 2020

*Moderated by **Nataša Perućica** (DiploFoundation) and **Marc Limon** (Universal Rights Group).*

Dr Dovid R Boyd - UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

What we are seeing today is a glimpse of the future we want: people want to breath clean air, to drink good water, live in the world where nature is flourishing. Everyone has a basic human right to live in healthy and sustainable environment: we need to figure ways to apply the rights-based approach.

6-9 million people are killed by **air pollution** every year, over 1 million people do not have access to **safe water**, 800 million people go to bed **hungry**. We need to address unsustainability of the society today, through focusing on organic agriculture, solar energy, wind energy... We have to have **preventive action**, not just responsive action. The trillions of dollars that will be spent on recovery should be invested into a more sustainable world where we can **prevent the emergence of future pandemics**.

Lessons from the **indigenous peoples**: they do not perceive the separation between humans and nature, and speak not that much about the rights but also about the individual **responsibilities**.

Dr Olivier De Schutter - UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

For years we thought that all our problems can be solved by economic growth – we need to change this paradigm. **3 things to do**:

1. To use this crisis as an opportunity to **strengthen social protection schemes** and rights-based approach (e.g. 82% of people in Africa do not have social protection);
2. Large amounts of money go to support corporations – **strong conditionality** should be imposed by only supporting **companies that are environmentally sustainable**, companies that **practice due diligence**, and companies that **do not practice tax avoiding** / tax optimization.
3. We should avoid imposing strong austerity programmes in the name of reducing public deficits.

Governments **have a duty to make the responsible choices easy and affordable** (e.g. by developing good transportation system, making affordable sustainable plant-based diet, investing in insulation of buildings, and ensuring strong carbon pricing strategies – in short, creating a framework in which people can exercise their rights).

Mr Markus Wüest - head of the Environmental Monitoring Section at the Federal Office for the Environment in Switzerland

Global CO2 emissions are expected to decline by 8% or almost 2.6 gigatonnes, to levels of 10 years ago. Such a **year-on-year reduction would be the largest ever**. As after previous crises, however, **the rebound in emissions may be larger than the decline**, unless the wave of investment to restart the economy is dedicated to cleaner and more resilient energy infrastructure (IEA, Global Energy Review 2020).

If we want to get people back to work we should use all possibilities to make work cheaper, if we want to protect environment, we should **make environmental use more expensive**.

Dr Elizabeth O'Casey - head of Humanists International's delegation to the UN in Geneva

Multilateralism is the answer – even if it is imperfect. The **global response** is necessary to address the universal rights. Covid-19 crisis revealed the **pre-existing discrimination, prejudice, poverty**. We need to raise people from scarcity, poverty and fear, and then to **share reliable knowledge**.

More **critical engagement** is needed to ensure SDG 16 "Strong institutions". States need to engage better, and to do so in a critical way. However, it is not just about state actions – but also about **private actors**.

Dr James Turpin - Senior Human Rights Officer at the UN OHCHR

The key is to learn the lessons and to **build more resilience**. It is not about how we measure the impact now, but how we design the societies in which everyone has **access to protection systems**.

The slow-motion pandemic of climate change should not be neglected.

For states to meet the obligations under human rights and SDGs, positive dynamic relationships should be built between the governments and the individuals.