

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 49th SESSION

Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights

The **Independent Expert, Ms. Attiya Waris** highlighted that poverty reduction in the last 2 decades has been jeopardized by the pandemic. Constraints in fiscal space, at a time of heightened need of health services and social protection schemes, only exacerbated inequality. Crucial areas to work on included the burden of unsustainable debt, the losses incurred due to illicit financial flows, the weakness of effective taxation of multinational corporations, and the urgency to address and regulate financial systems. In addition, she expressed concern for public and private debt levels and said there were substantive grounds to fear a systemic debt crisis, with more sovereign and private defaults to come. She made a call for reform of the international debt architecture to respond to the current debt crisis and to prevent a vicious cycle of debt. Finally, she mentioned she would be visiting Pakistan (in May) and Argentina (in August) this year.

Interactive dialogue: The majority of countries commended the IE's report and said it was essential for states to address the consequences of foreign debt in order for them to design and apply measures that respond effectively to the protection of the human rights of all people without discrimination. **Algeria and Egypt** said that the recovery of illicit financial flows was a responsibility of all States, by facilitating their return to the countries of origin. **China** called to increase support for countries that were particularly hard-hit by the pandemic and showed concern that developed economies transmit inflationary pressures to emerging economies and developing countries. It also denounced austerity measures adopted by international financial institutions and their negative impact on developing countries, and hoped that the IE would urge relevant Western countries and the United States to eliminate the UCMs that only increased the debt burden of the sanctioned countries. **Cuba** said it was important to consider the consequences of the international order imposed on the world from the centres of geopolitical and financial power as well as the impact of UCMs. **Iraq** stressed the need of assisting developing and least developed countries in achieving long-term debt sustainability. **Libya** highlighted the issue of reforming credit rating agencies in view of their critical role in the international financial system. **Tunisia** called on the international financial institutions and donor countries, to ease the burden of debt for developing and least developed countries. **Venezuela** asked for a serious revision of the conditions of the debt, not only for the reactivation of the economies, but so that they do not become a weapon of control or domination against the countries of the South, through new debts that could be non-ending. The **Russian Federation** asked the SR to adapt her plan to the practical realities as it is very academic, focus on analysing the actions of certain countries and financial institutions that are creating risks for human rights, and assess the decision of Western countries to exclude **Russian banks** from the SWIFT system.

NGOs called the SR to engage with feminist analysis and critiques of neo-liberalism, corporate power, and its collusions with patriarchy, racism and militarism; showed concern for the fact that fiscal revenue was shrinking and external debt was resurging for too many fragile countries; denounced India's privatization of entities that was leading to a massive violation of economic, social and cultural rights; condemned the rise of private debt in India and people committing suicide for not being able to repay loans; expressed that developing countries should dictate their needs rather than being coerced into projects or policies that may not address the needs of the people; and focused on the need for an international mechanism for sovereign debt restructuring.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (23 country delegations):

Egypt, Cuba, Angola, Libya, Venezuela, Malaysia, Iraq, Kenya, Maldives, China, Namibia, Cameroon, Pakistan, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Benin, Algeria, South Africa, Tunisia, Botswana, Malawi, Bolivia, Iran.

NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (10):

Indigenous People of Africa Coordinating Committee, Action Canada for Population and Development, Mother of Hope Cameroon Common Initiative Group, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, Asociación Civil, Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, Institut International pour les Droits et le Développement, Sikh Human Rights Group, Prahar, Integrated Youth Empowerment - Common Initiative Group, Global Welfare Association.

To watch full meeting refer to [UN Web TV](#).