

International financial institutions must show the way on human rights and good governance, says UN expert

GENEVA (21 September 2020) – International financial institutions (IFIs) must systematically take all necessary measures to ensure that their activities and the projects that they support do not lead to human rights violations, including those committed by clients, a UN human rights expert said today.

“Through their economic policies and the safeguards they have put in place, IFIs can have a direct influence on how national authorities as clients deliver on good governance and therefore abide by their obligation to respect the human rights of their population,” the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international, Livingstone Sewanyana, told the Human Rights Council.

In his annual [report](#), the expert addressed stakeholder engagement and issues of public participation, transparency and reprisals; State responsiveness to the needs of the population and retrogressive measures; and the fight against corruption.

He called on IFIs to ensure that their safeguard frameworks contain a clear commitment to respecting human rights and to conducting human rights due diligence; conduct human rights impact assessments prior to imposing loan conditions that compel States to take retrogressive measures; and embrace a human rights-based approach to combating corruption that focuses on the victim, State responsibility, prevention and redress.

Importantly, IFIs must use their substantial leverage to ensure that their clients respect human rights and the principle of good governance, Sewanyana said.

“While IFIs should always aspire to be actors of positive change on the ground, it is first and foremost the responsibility of States, in particular in their capacity as IFIs’ clients, to ensure good governance and respect for human rights on the ground,” he said. “This responsibility starts with ensuring a safe environment that is conducive to the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms, and pursuing accountability.”

Crucially, respect for human rights, good governance and the interests of local communities must be at the very heart of what drives sustainable development. “This requirement is all the more important in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated several of the challenges identified in my report and increased the vulnerability of groups at risk,” the expert said.

International financial institutions must show the way on human rights and good governance, says UN expert

ENDS

**Mr. Livingstone Sewanyana** (Uganda) was appointed as the second Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order by the Human Rights Council and took up his mandate on 1 May 2018. A lawyer by profession and advocate of the High Court of Uganda, he is the Founder and Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHTI), a Ugandan civil society organisation. He has written and published widely on human rights, corporate governance, public sector management and access to justice.

The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organisation and serve in their individual capacity.

For more information and **media requests**, please contact: Mr. Guillaume Pfeiffé (+41 22 917 9384 / [gpfeiffle@ohchr.org](mailto:gpfeiffle@ohchr.org)) or write to [ie-internationalorder@ohchr.org](mailto:ie-internationalorder@ohchr.org). For media enquiries regarding other UN independent experts, please contact Renato de Souza (+41 22 928 9855 / [rrosariodesouza@ohchr.org](mailto:rrosariodesouza@ohchr.org)), Jeremy Laurence (+ 41 22 917 7578 / [jlaurence@ohchr.org](mailto:jlaurence@ohchr.org)) and Kitty McKinsey ([kmckinsey@ohchr.org](mailto:kmckinsey@ohchr.org))

Follow news related to the UN's independent human rights experts on Twitter [@UN\\_SPExperts](https://twitter.com/UN_SPExperts).

Concerned about the world we live in?

**Then STAND UP for someone's rights today.**

#Standup4humanrights

and visit the web page at <http://www.standup4humanrights.org>