



GENEVA DIARIES

11 September 2023 - 10 October 2023



IWF's Report on the 54th Session of United Nations Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and making recommendations on them. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It is the world's peak multilateral human rights body comprised of 47 Member States and meets at least three times per year in Geneva. It is mandated to strengthen the global promotion and protection of human rights, and to address human rights violations and situations of concern.

The fifty-fourth session of the United Nations Human Rights Council is being held in Geneva, Switzerland at Palais des Nations since 11th September- 13th October 2023. The various mandates under discussion during this session are- (a) the mandate of Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; (b) the mandate of Special Rapporteur on minority issues; (c) the mandate of Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; and (d) the mandate of Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism. The mandates of the four current mandate holders were extended until the appointment of their successors.

The key issues considered including reprisals, arbitrary detention, systemic racism, enforced disappearances, water and sanitation, and the rights of Indigenous peoples and people of African descent. It will also present an opportunity to address grave situations in over a dozen States.

India Water Foundation at the 54th Session of UNHRC

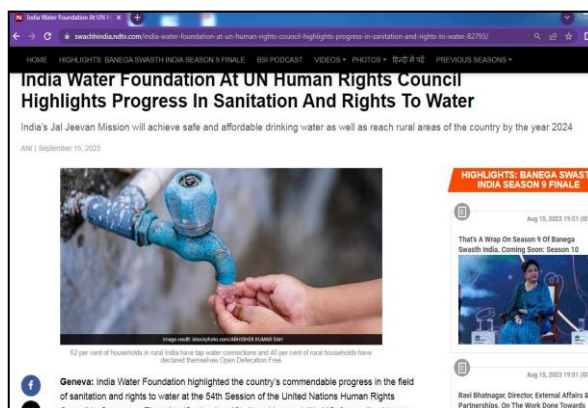
India water Foundation participated in the 54th session of the UNHRC with full force submitting written statements, speaking as panelist in side events and organizing a side event.

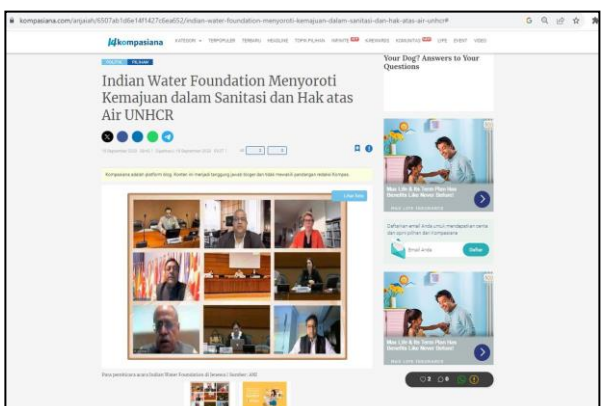
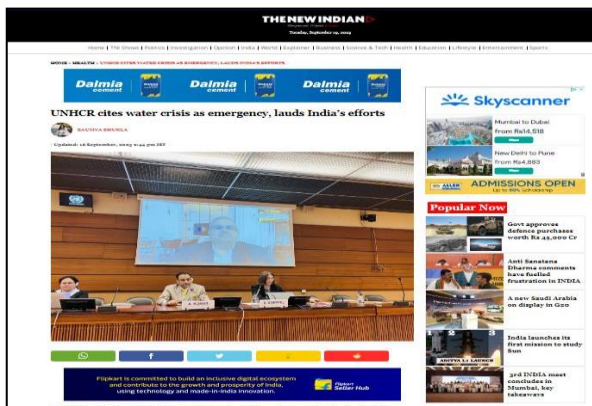


Side Event- India Water Foundation organized a side event titled “Human Rights in India-Safeguarding Human Right to Water and Sanitation amidst Climate Emergency” on 14th September 2023. The eminent speakers in the event were- Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation, Mr. Satya Tripathi, Secretary General, Global Alliance for sustainable planet, Mr. Rajan Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer United Nations ESCAP-SSWA Office, Ms. Karin Gardes, Acting Executive Director & COO, Stockholm International Water Institute, MS. Sonja Koepfel, Co-

secretary Protocol on Water and Health and Secretary of the Water Convention, Mr. Vishwaranjan Sinha, Programme Officer, Water and Wetlands-South Asia, IUCN. The side event analyzed the policies and programmes related to human right to water and sanitation in India especially in the context of climate emergency the world is grappling with.

All the speakers appreciated the Government of India for the significant progress India has made especially in Water and sanitation sector and also gave suggestions and recommendations for the sustainability of the schemes. The side event received ample coverage in national and international media and was much appreciated by all.





Media Coverage Links

- <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/india-water-foundation-at-unhrc-highlights-progress-in-sanitation-and-rights-to-water20230915224127/>
- <https://www.newindian.in/un-ecosoc-india-water-foundation-analyzed-policies-and-programs-in-india-related-to-the-human-right-to-water-and-sanitation/>
- <https://swachhindia.ndtv.com/india-water-foundation-at-un-human-rights-council-highlights-progress-in-sanitation-and-rights-to-water-82793/>
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- <https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/international/2595623-india-water-foundation-at-unhrc-highlights-progress-in-sanitation-and-rights-to-water>
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- <https://www.kompasiana.com/anjaiah/6507ab1d6e14f1427c6ea652/indian-water-foundation-menyoroti-kemajuan-dalam-sanitasi-dan-hak-atas-air-unhcr#>

Written statements- The written statements were submitted in interactive dialogues like right to water and sanitation, right to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, right to clean and healthy environment, annual panel discussion on gender equality, right to equitable international order etc.

Oral statements- The oral statements were delivered in –

1. General Assembly 4
2. Right to development
3. ID with working group on mercenaries
4. Right to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and covid-19 recovery-
5. Right to equitable international order

Right to Equitable International Order

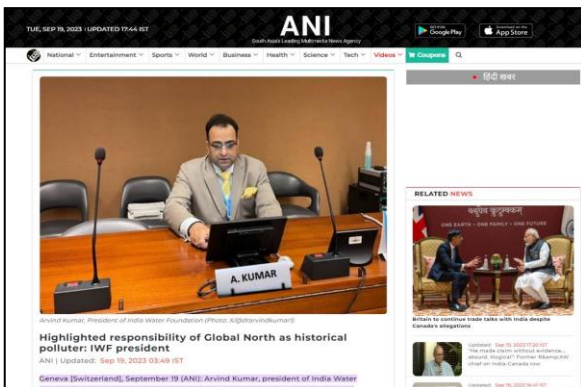
At the 54th session of the UN Human Rights Council Meeting on Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation highlighted the responsibility of Global North as a historical



polluter. He further stressed that the recent global developments, such as Covid pandemic, triple planetary crisis, mounting debt, challenges of food and energy security etc. have severely impacted the Global South. As a development sector organization IWF has been vocal about the energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables and India is the forerunner in global and sustainable energy transitions. At various climate Summits, India resisted the onslaught from the Global North and protected the interest of the Global South be it on the question of climate financing, limiting the emission norms, or highlighting the Global North's responsibility as the historical polluter. As a responsible neighbor India not just gave

vaccines to most of its neighbors but also to Africa and other countries of the global south considering the whole world as one family or Vasudhaiv kutumbkam.



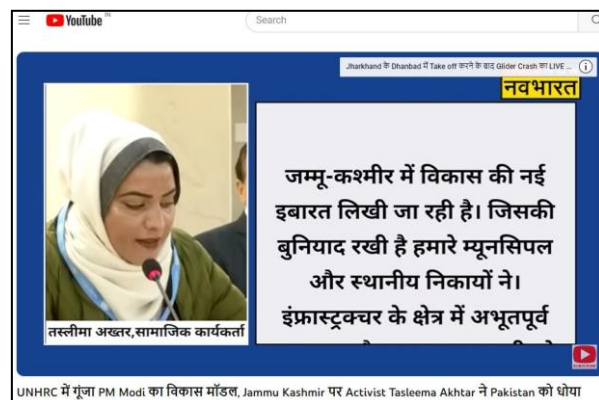


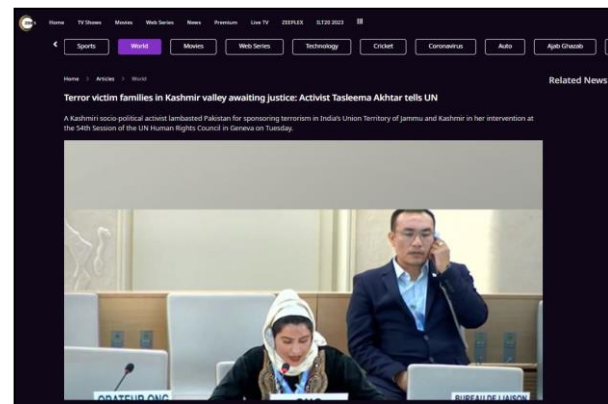
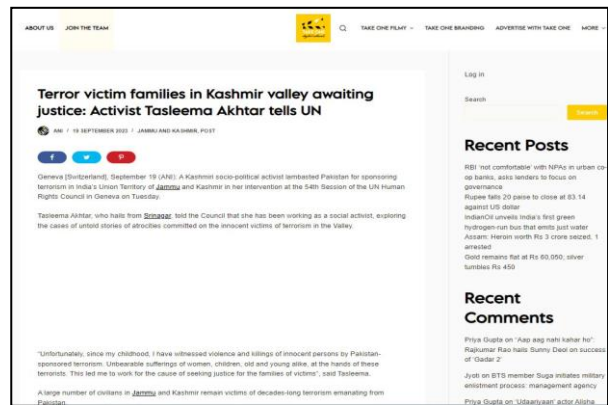
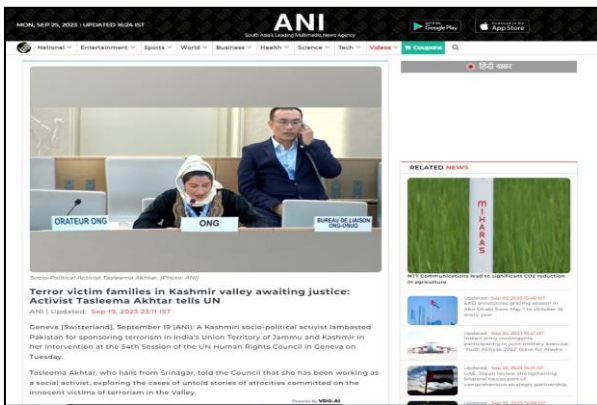
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Right to Development

India Water Foundation's representative from Kashmir Ms. Tasleema Akhter during the Interactive dialogue with the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. She also highlighted how as a social activist she has been exploring the cases of untold stories of atrocities committed on the innocent victims of terrorism in the Valley and have witnessed violence and killings of innocent persons by Pakistan sponsored terrorism. She appealed to the UN Human Rights Council to take appropriate action against the perpetrators of such inhuman acts so that the people of Kashmir can live happily and peacefully thereafter.





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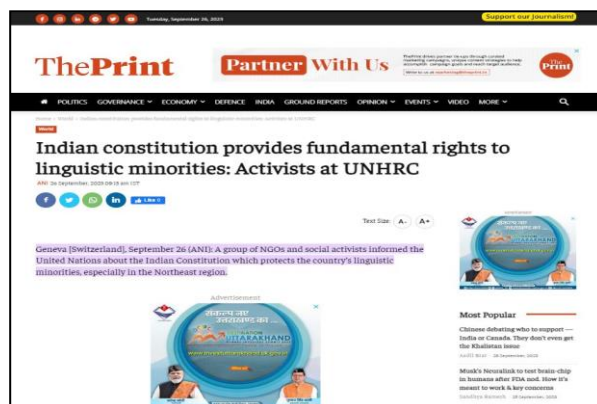
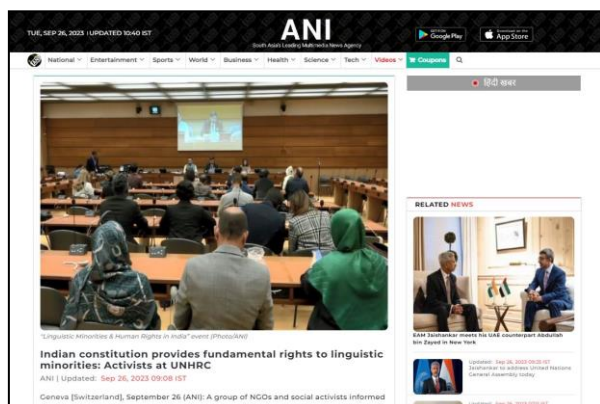
Panelist

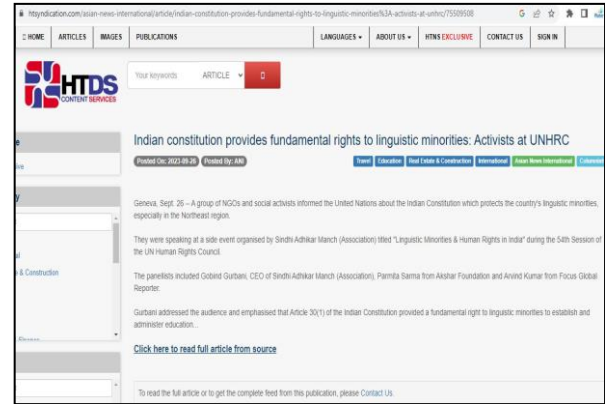
As a panelist in Side Event on ‘Linguistics Minorities’ on 25th September 2023 Dr. Kumar gave a true account and reasons behind the recent Manipur crisis which was blown out of proportion

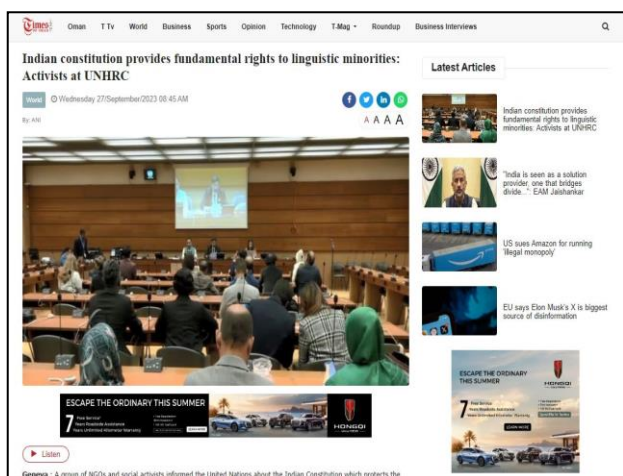


by national and international media. He said, “There is hardly any doubt that India’s North East Region is full of potential, not just for economic growth but also for cultural exchange and in the past decade the development has changed the face of the region and brought the states from periphery to mainstream. If we speak especially for Manipur then there is a systematic anti-India disinformation Campaign going on where bots from across the border have tweeted extensively, giving a religious angle to the Manipur incident.” He further added

that “There is a need to implement tailored strategies that cater to the unique needs and aspirations of the state by ensuring comprehensive infrastructure and human development, addressing unemployment and providing alternative livelihood opportunities for long-term stability.”



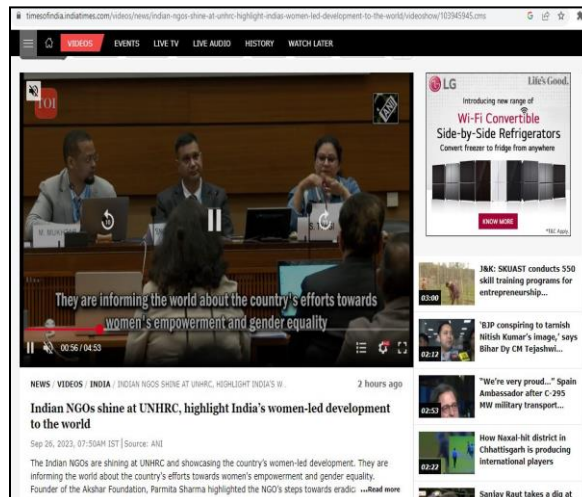
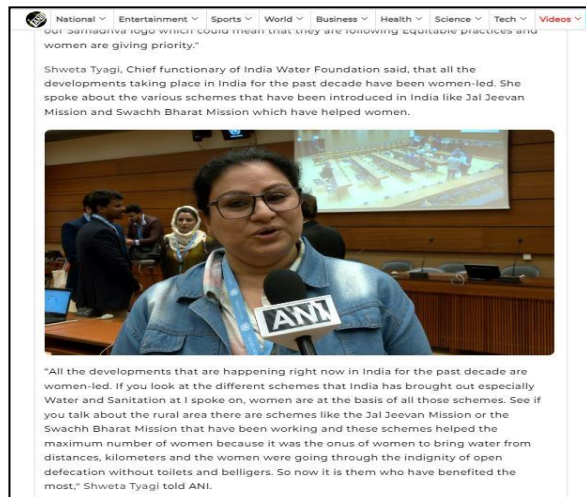




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Indian NGOs Shine at UNHRC: Showcasing Country's Women Led-Development



Shweta Tyagi, Chief functionary of India Water Foundation said, that all the developments taking place in India for the past decade have been women-led. She spoke about the various schemes that have been introduced in India like Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission which have helped women.

"All the developments that are happening right now in India for the past decade are women-led. If you look at the different schemes that India has brought out especially Water and Sanitation at I spoke on, women are at the basis of all those schemes. See if you talk about the rural area there are schemes like the Jal Jeevan Mission or the Swachh Bharat Mission that have been working and these schemes helped the maximum number of women because it was the onus of women to bring water from distances, kilometers and the women were going through the indignity of open defecation without toilets and bellers. So now it is them who have benefited the most," Shweta Tyagi told ANI.

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Devdiscourse

Indian NGOs inform UNHRC about efforts towards women's empowerment, gender equality

Speaking during the UN's Annual discussion on the Integration of a Gender Perspective, a social activist and founder of Akshar Foundation, a women-led NGO based in India, Parmita Sharma said they believe the goals of poverty eradication and gender equality go hand in hand.

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Indian NGOs inform UNHRC about efforts towards women's empowerment, gender equality

Summary by The Print

Geneva (Switzerland), September 26 (ANI): Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from India participated at the 54th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council informing the world about the country's efforts towards women's empowerment and gender equality. Speaking during the UN's Annual discussion on the Integration of a Gender Perspective, a social activist and founder of Akshar [...]

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The Print

Indian NGOs inform UNHRC about efforts towards women's empowerment, gender equality

Geneva (Switzerland), September 26 (ANI): Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from India participated at the 54th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council informing the world about the country's efforts towards women's empowerment and gender equality. Speaking during the

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Indian NGOs Shine At UNHRC: Showcasing Country's Women-Led Development

Updated: September 26, 2023 3:22 PM IST

By Vidya Desai



"INDIA DOING A LOT FOR WOMEN"

The Indian NGOs are shining at UNHRC and showcasing the country's women-led development. They are informing the world about the

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Indian NGOs report progress on women's empowerment, gender equality to UNHRC

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The social activist also highlighted that India's historic decision of passing a new law reserving one-third of Parliament seats for women. She added, "We request the Council and other international bodies to do more to increase the participation of girls and young women from developing nations in sessions like this one with

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Efforts to Advance Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment informed by Indian NGOs to UNHRC

By NE Staff | Tuesday, 26 September 2023



GENDER EQUALITY

The 54th session of the UN Human Rights Council was held where Indian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) took part to inform about the nation's efforts to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women in the world.

Parmita Sharma, a social activist and the founder of the Akshar Foundation, an Indian women-led NGO, put forward her views during the UN's annual discussion on the "Integration of a Gender Perspective" that she believes the objectives of ending poverty and promoting gender equality go hand in hand. She further said that a stronger emphasis on girls' education is necessary to achieve the goal of equal integration of women's perspectives in the Human Rights Council and other UN bodies, as well as in government more generally.

The eradication of poverty to increase literacy and employability among underprivileged girls will contribute to gender discrimination. Along with this, providing vocational training in tailoring, electronics, nursing, and teaching with apprenticeship will ensure a fruitful livelihood for girls.

Self-defence is also a crucial factor in empowering females. The National Cadet Corps primarily trains females for careers in law enforcement. These initiatives have resulted in girls staying in schools longer, lowering the number of child brides in the underprivileged regions and the recently passed law in India that reserves one-third of the seats in the Parliament for women is one of the great initiatives taken to empower women.

In addition to scholarships and travel assistance, the council and other international bodies need to host more such initiatives to increase women's participation, so that they can realize their strengths and aspire to be more and participate on a global stage.

The Jagadish Samarth Kalpan Sanathan (JSGS) also put together a separate event with the theme "Ensuring Gender Equitable Practices at Every Pace through SAMST" which shows the great approaches to development and achieving SDGs.

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Here's an overview of some of the key issues on the agenda of the 54th session of UN Human Rights Council.

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Economic, social and cultural rights

- a. Environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes- It holds the mandate of human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes.
- b. Human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation- It holds the mandate of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.
- c. Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights- This discusses the follow-up report on good practices and challenges in the application of a human rights-based approach to the elimination of preventable maternal mortality and A/HRC/54/1 5 morbidity, including through the utilization of the technical guidance by States and other relevant actors, including the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Health Organization.
- d. Promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights within the context of addressing inequalities in the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic- It discusses promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights within the context of addressing inequalities in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Civil and political rights

- a. Enforced or involuntary disappearances- It is a working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.
- b. Truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence- It discusses the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.
- c. Contemporary forms of slavery- It discusses contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences.
- d. Question of the death penalty- It discusses on capital punishment and the implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty.
- e. Equal participation in political and public affairs- It discusses challenges, good practices and experiences in implementing the right to participate in public affairs, notably in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic recovery, including the role of participation in securing public health, and to prepare a summary report thereon, including any recommendations stemming there from, with a view to ensuring better recovery.
- f. Arbitrary detention- It discusses on Arbitrary Detention

Right to development

It focuses on identifying and sharing best practices with Member States and to promote the implementation of the right to development worldwide for the enjoyment of all human rights, in order to allow Member States, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, international and regional organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to identify challenges and gaps and share good practices and experiences in this regard.

Rights of peoples and of specific groups and individuals

- a. Youth and human rights- It holds discussion on youth and human rights, fully accessible to persons with disabilities and young people's engagement with climate change and global environmental decision-making processes.
- b. Human rights and Indigenous Peoples- It discusses the impact of certain development projects on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular the impact on Indigenous women and contributes to the promotion of, respect for and the full application of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to follow up on the effectiveness of the Declaration.
- c. Human rights of older persons- It discusses the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.
- d. Rights of the child- It discusses the report on the rights of the child and inclusive social protection, in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, including States, the United Nations Children's Fund, other relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, regional organizations and human rights bodies, national human rights institutions and civil society, including through consultations with children themselves, to make the report available in an accessible and child-friendly format.
- e. Human rights of migrants- It discusses the human rights of migrants.

Interrelation of human rights and human rights thematic issues

It discusses the gaps, challenges and progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, focusing on the means of implementation taken together as an integrated package. Need for an integrated approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the full realization of human rights, focusing holistically on the means of implementation. It discusses the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the prevention of human rights violations. Also countering cyber bullying against children, which will be fully accessible to persons with disabilities, inviting States, civil society organizations, including children's organizations, United Nations agencies, the private sector, academia and other relevant stakeholders, ensuring the participation of children themselves, to address the implementation of the obligations of States under relevant provisions of international human rights law and to discuss challenges and best practices in this regard. Moreover countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence an update on the various drivers, root causes and human rights impacts of religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, highlighting gaps in existing national, legal, policy and law enforcement frameworks, in particular in the context of the urgent debate held at its fifty-third session, to be followed by an interactive dialogue. The discussions were on the Negative impact of the legacies of colonialism on the enjoyment of human rights, Impact of unilateral coercive measures and overcompliance on the right to

development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, World Programme for Human Rights Education, Mandate of the open-ended intergovernmental working group to elaborate the content of an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies, Right to work in connection with climate change actions, responses and impacts in the context of sustainable and inclusive economies, Contribution of the Human Rights Council with regard to the human rights implications of drug policy.

Panel Discussions

1. Biennial panel discussion on unilateral coercive measures and human rights Theme: “Impact of unilateral coercive measures and over compliance on the right to development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms.
3. Biennial panel discussion on youth and human rights Theme: Young people’s engagement with climate change and global environmental decision-making processes accessible to persons with disabilities.
4. Annual half-day panel discussion on the rights of Indigenous Peoples Theme: Impact of certain development projects on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular the impact on Indigenous women accessible to persons with disabilities.

Other thematic debates

At this 54th session, the Council discussed a range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and issues through dedicated debates with the:

1. Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation
2. Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights
3. Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence
4. Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development and the Special Rapporteur on the right to development
5. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences
6. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
7. Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order
8. Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances
9. Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination

10. Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes
11. OHCHR on its report on economic, social and cultural rights, and COVID-19 recovery
12. Advisory Committee
13. ID on HC oral update on drivers, root causes and human rights impacts of religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence

In addition, the Council will hold dedicated debates on the rights of specific groups including with the:

1. Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons
2. Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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