

More urgency needed to help increasing numbers 'locked out', before 2030, says UN's Bachelet

In a special meeting of the [Human Rights Council](#) in Geneva to review progress on achieving the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) of the [2030 Agenda](#), Michelle Bachelet insisted that "overall, we are not on track" to meet its ambitious aims:

It is a promise extended to people previously locked out of development: the marginalized, disempowered and excluded communities – *UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet on the 2030 Agenda*

"The 2030 Agenda is a commitment to achieve greater international cooperation for a more equitable international order," she said. "But above all, it is a promise extended to people previously locked out of development: the marginalized, disempowered and excluded communities; the millions of women, racial, religious and caste minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, persons with disabilities, Roma and the poor."

Acknowledging "tremendous progress in some countries" on tackling extreme poverty; mortality rates for the under-fives; and promoting education, particularly in Asia; Ms. Bachelet listed numerous obstacles that continue to prevent fair development for all.

Women's inequality is a major impediment, she insisted, along with hunger, war and climate change.

44,000 each day forced to flee

"Conflicts are destroying people's lives, hopes and ability to earn a decent livelihood in the places they were born," she said. "44,400 people are forced to flee their homes every day because of conflict or persecution. Climate change is generating overwhelming environmental disasters, which devastate basic infrastructure and exacerbate tensions and conflicts."

Questioning whether the world's nations were meeting the "great goal" of leaving no-one behind by 2030, the UN rights chief cited [International Labour Organization](#) (ILO) data, which indicated a growing gap between the rich and poor, despite workers' higher productivity.

"With just 12 years left to 2030, we need a greater sense of urgency about achieving the Agenda's promise to the world's people," she said, before explaining that the outcomes of the Human Rights Council meeting would contribute to the work of the High-Level Political Forum ([HLPF](#)) at the UN in New York in July – the organization's central platform for follow-up and

review of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).



UN News/Daniel Johnson

UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet (right) and former High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson (left) speaking at a meeting of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Equalities widening everywhere

At Ms Bachelet's side, former High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson echoed the need to address widening inequalities "both between and within countries", insisting that wealth and opportunities were "increasingly concentrating in the hands of the few".

Such inequalities, create winners and losers, Ms Robinson maintained, serving to "catalyse social unrest, deepen divides and increase xenophobia; all major concerns for the realisation of rights".

Ms Robinson, who heads a "climate justice" foundation which seeks to protect the rights of people who are affected by climate change, noted its impact on vulnerable communities.

"When dams flood the land of indigenous people, mining pollutes local water supplies and infrastructure projects displace impoverished communities, development efforts are being realised at the expense of the realisation of human rights for all," she said.

Governments in many parts of the world were "failing to provide essential services", Ms Robinson continued, "including access to healthcare, education, quality housing, sanitation or drinking water with little accountability. Populations are routinely denied access to information and justice; this must change. Human rights norms constitute a bulwark against incoherent and unequal progress towards the SDGs and should be used as such."

After calling for Governments to link their efforts to limit global warming with implementation of the 2030 Agenda for rights-based sustainable development, Ms Robinson highlighted how the Human Rights Council had showed what was possible, by tasking its subsidiary bodies and investigators to incorporate the sustainable development goals into their reports.

“I urge all states and other actors to make use of the synergies between human rights and the 2030 Agenda,” she said, “by integrating development reporting with human rights reporting, and by working closely with rights holders, national human rights institution and equality bodies to ensure transparent and effective approaches.”