Roundtable

The Catalytic Role of Thematic Special Procedures
on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University
17-18 November, 2017
International Affairs Building, Room 801-802

FRIDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2017

Session 1: Welcome **Mariana Montoya, Inga Winkler and Catarina de Albuquerque**	**1:00 – 2:30**
- Welcome and objective of the roundtable - Introduction of participants	
Session 2: Lessons learnt from the Special Rapporteurs' engagement in Detroit **Chair: Inga Winkler**	**2:30 – 4:00**
- What role can and should the Special Procedures play in addressing human rights challenges at the local level? How can they best engage at that level? What are the key stakeholders for them to engage with? - Do Special Rapporteurs ever face difficulties in accessing or connecting with the local population? How can UN experts amplify and represent community voices in a legitimate way? - How do you decide strategically at which point Special Procedures can play a useful role in supporting more long-term efforts? - How important is it for Special Rapporteurs to engage long-term, including through follow-up visits and building relationships with civil society?	
Coffee Break	**4:00 – 4:30**

Session 3: Professional background and skills of mandate-holders	4:30 – 6:00
Chair: Mariana Montoya	

- How can we ensure professional diversity among mandate-holders? What professional backgrounds are most useful to work on the implementation of ESCRs? Are there any particularities related to ESCRs that influence how mandate-holders can best contribute to the realization of human rights? If so, how does that influence their mandates?

- What skills are desirable in mandate-holders? How important are familiarity with human rights mechanisms and diplomatic processes, advocacy experience, and experience in their respective sectors, diplomatic skills, and media savviness? What role does personality and charisma play?

- Is there any training that can be offered to mandate-holders to support them in fulfilling their mandate? How important is it to have awareness and understanding of the particular challenges and vulnerabilities of specific persons and groups who are experiencing human rights violations? How can this be achieved?

- How can we encourage qualified and capable candidates to apply to become mandate-holders? What can be done to increase transparency and awareness of the nomination and election process?

Reception: Wine & Fingerfood	6:00

SATURDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2017

Breakfast	9:00 – 9:30
Session 4: Cooperation with other stakeholders	9:30 – 11:00
Chair: Mariana Montoya	

- Given the increasing number of mandates, how important is the collaboration between different mandates? Does it increase their impact? Or is one mandate just as impactful? Is there a risk that collaboration reduces their work to the lowest common denominator? What kind of collaboration could (and should) happen between mandates? Does collaboration between mandates help to address intersectional issues?

- Does collaborating with other mandates change the dynamics of working with states and how they respond to recommendations? Since the HRC creates separate mandates, does such collaboration have any implications (good or bad)?

- How important is the collaboration with other stakeholders including NGOs, UN agencies and the private sector? What are the different roles and how can these dynamics be leveraged to further the realization of human rights? How can mandate-holders foster these relationships?

- Has the collaboration with one (type of) stakeholder ever jeopardized the good standing with other stakeholders? If so, how can mandates balance getting the full picture and maintaining access to certain actors?

- In shaping recommendations, is there any collaboration with government actors in making them as practical as possible? To what degree do questions of 'implementability' take precedence over formulating recommendations that seek to address human rights violations to the greatest extent possible?
- Beyond follow-up reports and visits, are there any unofficial methods to encourage state action on initial recommendations? Do mandates maintain personal contact with any stakeholders, namely civil society or individual victims, to inform follow-up activities?
- How can Special Rapporteurs further identify and leverage synergies with other human rights mechanisms of the global, regional and national levels?

Coffee Break	11:00 – 11:15

Session 5: (External) Funding for Special Procedures Chair: Catarina de Albuquerque	11:15 – 12:45

- Are further steps necessary to increase transparency in external funding for mandate-holders?
- When earmarked or external funding is provided by a particular government or other funder, is there a concern about influencing the mandate and its priorities even if indirectly?
- What steps can be taken to ensure that mandate holders guard their independence? Should guidelines on funding be developed? If so, who should develop them? And what should they address?
- As a means to address imbalances in funding, should a share of earmarked funding be pooled and evenly distributed among all mandates? Does the imbalance in funding have to be addressed? If so, what would be other ways of achieving it?
- Considering the exponential growth of numbers of mandates every year, how should the mandates be funded in the future?

Lunch	12:45 – 1:45
Session 6: Focusing on Strategies for ESCR Chair: Inga Winkler	1:45 – 3:15

- Mandate-holders have greatly contributed to the normative development of ESCRs. Given that mandate holders shift their focus towards the implementation of human rights, what approaches should they adopt to that end?
- Is it more difficult for Special Rapporteurs in the field of ESCRs to advocate for 'their rights'? How can they successfully depict the urgency and importance of realizing these rights when human rights violations are chronic?
- How can Special Rapporteurs address the systematic and structural challenges involved in implementing ESCRs? What approaches can they adopt to bring about long-term structural changes to achieve the full realization of human rights? How can Special Rapporteurs address deeply entrenched inequalities?

- How can mandate-holders contribute to holding governments accountable when their obligations require resource allocation and building institutional capacity?
- Is there a risk that tools such as urgent appeals and letters of allegation address predominantly violations of the obligation to respect? How can these tools be used strategically to address systemic human rights violations?
- What activities, in addition to country missions and communications (i.e. letters of allegations and urgent appeals), have proven to be effective in contributing to the realization of human rights? How does the preparation of the country missions, reports and communications affect the impact achieved by the Special Rapporteurs?

Coffee Break	**3:15 – 3:30**
Session 7: Identifying Success Factors **Chairs: Mariana Montoya and Inga Winkler**	**3:30 – 5:00**

- Based on the preceding discussions, how can mandate-holders best engage to contribute to the realization of ESCR?
- At what level do they have the most leverage? At the international, national or local level? How should they decide where and how to engage?
- How can mandate-holders find a balance between more cooperative and more adversarial strategies? How do they decide when which type of strategy is likely to yield the greatest success? What are some of the factors to consider?
- Wrap up