

SDGs and Human Rights: how to measure States' compliance?

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Abstract

In September 2015 UN General Assembly approved the SDGs and all over the world the expectations focused on the new UN Development Agenda. Apparently, issues concerning Human Rights and Human security, including absence of violence, promotion of sustainable peace and accountable institutions, have been strongly taken into account during negotiations. From this perspective, the SDGs go far beyond MDGs while acknowledging a deep connection with human development.

Nonetheless, the references made to human rights law in the final document are weak and fragmented. Moreover, the SDG 16, focused on security and promotion of the rule of law, is not time-bound and does not include clear indicators related to its targets.

In the light of this, the main objective of this paper is to analyse the grade of real recognition of human rights and security issues in the Post-2015 Agenda and to suggest possible indicators for SDG 16 targets based on juridical instruments.

For this reason connections between

SDGs and existing human rights binding norms will be assessed in order to demonstrate how the inclusion of explicit references to core treaties in the above-mentioned indicators could promote a more effective monitoring.

Key Words: SDGs, Human Security, Human Rights, Human Development, Post-2015 Development Agenda

1. From MDGs to SDGs, Human Rights and Security in the latest UN Development Agendas

Development (intended as economic development) and human rights lived separated under the same roof over various decades. Despite being 'the two sides of the same coin'¹, their direct relation became mainstreamed only over the last decades. Currently, we had to wait until 1994 to have the first Report of UNDP devoted to the new notion of Human Development. Certainly it represented a fundamental step to a more holistic approach to development. Human capabilities, a theoretical notion defined by Amartya Sen², became the keystone of a new paradigm of development, people-centered and human rights-based. Over the following years, almost all UN bodies and agencies, even IFIs, started to adopt this new paradigm, less or more sincerely.

¹ Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, «Indicators of human development and human rights -- overlaps, differences ... and what about the human development index?», *Statistical Journal of the UN Economic Commission for Europe* 18, n.° 2/3 (June 2001): 239.

² Amartya Sen, «Human Rights and Capabilities», *Journal of Human Development* 6, n.° 2 (July 2005): 151-66.

Unfortunately, it did not trigger a Copernican revolution in development agendas as expected.

At the end of March 2000 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan asked the Member States to negotiate an unprecedented and ambitious action plan for the Millennium Summit, a special meeting of the fifty-fifth session of the UN General Assembly. His report³ led to the Millennium Declaration, a solemn document approved by the UN General Assembly in September the same year, officially calling world leaders to take concrete actions in order to eradicate extreme poverty, to fight against gender inequality and AIDS/HIV, to assist African countries' special needs, etc. However, no follow up was established in the same Declaration. For this reason, Vandemoortele⁴ affirms that the UN Secretary-General created a working group, whose mandate was to elaborate a solution to avoid Millennium Declaration's oblivion.

As results of this process, 8 Goals were elaborated and, according to the Member States, not only they reflected adequately the content of the Millennium Declaration, but also translated this content into measurable goals and targets to monitor until 2015. However, many criticisms have been identified while negotiating the Millennium Development Goals. Human Rights were not taken into adequate account and did not connect real targets and goals to the existing HR legal framework despite what officially stated by the Declaration. In the same way, human security issues were also not integrated into the 8 Goals, demonstrating a shortsighted approach which did not consider properly the interlinkages between security and development.

The debate about framing Human Rights and Human Security in development strategies arose again during the making process of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Despite its focus on two issues, such as Sustainable Development and economical and environmental matters, European states and NGOs taking part to negotiations strongly promoted the inclusion of a goal dedicated to security and fundamental rights. Against this position, many developing countries stressed the idea that HR and (human) security do not depend on sustainable development, since the Rio Declaration did not mention such areas despite being the main basis of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

After hard negotiations, Human Security and Human Rights were included in Sustainable Development Goal 16, even ifedulcorated.⁵ Moreover, human rights references has been made throughout the whole document, reinforcing those interlinkages missing in MDGs. This progress is undoubtedly due to the effective NGOs' and civil society groups' participation in negotiations, one of the most important innovation realized in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. They indeed presented positive evaluations for the SDG result, but also highlighted the importance that indicators will have in monitoring the accomplishment of those goals.

Currently, the definition of SDGs indicators did not follow the same process as the targets, namely because of its highly technical character. United Nations Statistical Committee led to the establishment of an inter-agency expert group with the mandate to

³ UN, *We the Peoples - The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*, Secretary-General Report, New York, 2000.

⁴ Jan Vandemoortele, «The MDG Story: Intention Denied», *Development and Change* 42, n.° 1 (2011): 1-21.

⁵ Currently, SDG 16 does not mention directly human rights and human security. It makes more generally mention to "peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development" and to the "access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". Source: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>.

develop relevant indicators for the 169 targets related to SDGs, in which civil society did not had the chance to participate and present its inputs. As result, the report presented by the IAEG-SDGs in February 2016 to UNSC did not mention any international juridical instrument already in force, limiting the proposal of indicators to mere statistics and not considering the existing framework of human rights indicators.

However, framing human rights indicators⁶ in the SDGs monitoring process could have reinforced Members commitments, while re-anchoring SDGs to hard law and avoiding overlappings. It has been just a missed occasion for creating a really innovative monitoring framework, which could measure quantitative, qualitative and juridical variations in the accomplishment of the targets, while reinforcing the SDGs with already recognized Human Rights.

2. Human rights as reflected in Post-2015 Development Agenda: not all that glisters is gold.

During the MDGs experience, multiple UN bodies, scholars and NGOs expressed criticisms about the vulnerabilities that MDGs formulation generated in terms of human rights, namely about equal distribution of benefits and women's rights. The focus was clearly too narrow and limited to social measures which did not take into account critical issues like vulnerable groups and environmental conditions (presence of conflicts, discriminations, challenged individual security, etc.).

When a new UN Development Agenda for post-2015 had to be defined, many stakeholders called for a solid human rights-based approach. Even Secretary General Ban Ki Moon expressed the opportunity for Member states to adopt a more integrated and holistic approach to development⁷, in which human rights should have represented a cross-setting issue guiding implementation and assuring a more equal progress in all targets.

The fact that Since SDGs negotiations took place in a more transparent and open way as it was established in Rio⁸, with the contribution of UN experts, members of the academic and civil society organizations, it was possible to reach a far better agreement than MDGs. However, human rights framing within the Post-2015 Development Agenda could be further improved. Political compromises led to 17 SDGs, addressing multiple aspects of fundamental rights, but without affirming them clearly (with the important exception of sexual and reproductive rights). Moreover, monitoring and follow-up regime is defined as voluntary, and managed by a High Level Political Forum,

⁶ Accordingly to OHCHR definition, "a human rights indicator is specific information on the state or condition of an object, event, activity or outcome that can be related to human rights norms and standards; that addresses and reflects human rights principles and concerns; and that can be used to assess and monitor the promotion and implementation of human rights". UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation*, 2012, HR/PUB/12/5, [accessed 25 May 2016].

⁷ UNGA, *A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015*. Report of the Secretary-General, A/68/202, 26 July 2013.

⁸ In the final Document of Rio+20 Summit, Member states resolved to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on sustainable development goals, open to all stakeholders, through the creation of a Open Working Group. It was called to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system in its work. UN, *The Future We Want*. A/RES/66/288, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2012, par. 248.

instead of a technical one.

The main problem while debating over how to conciliate SDGs with human rights was if they should be considered as a cross-cutting issue or fully acknowledged through a standing-alone goal. Northern countries, especially the European ones, mentioned the opportunity to follow the two routes, not only requiring a human rights-based approach while implementing all the SDGs' targets, but also fixing targets explicitly related to the promotion of HR. Denmark, Ireland and Norway went farer, suggesting two separate goals, concerning peaceful societies as well as good governance and rule of law. However, developing countries as Brazil, China, India, Iran and Russia rejected the thesis that any stand-alone goal or targets should be devoted to those issues, due to the fact that HR did not constitute a 4th pillar of Sustainable Development and to their risk to put in danger national sovereignty. However, the outcome is now evident under our eyes: a stand-alone goal (SDG 16), combined with several references to HR in the Declaration introduction.

Currently, SDG 16 contains several complex issues cited in an inspirational but also simplistic way: promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development (it is not very clear what sustainable development should mean in this context), provision of universal access to justice and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. Among the 12 targets related to this goal, Member states established no time-bound results in different areas, like security (16.1, 16.2, 16.a), rule of law (16.3), good governance (16.5, 16.6), global governance reform (16.8), and fundamental freedoms and non discrimination (16.10, 16.b).

It seems relevant that, differently from targets of other goals making references to international relevant agreements (Istanbul plan of Action, UNCLOS, UNFCCC, etc.), any SDG 16 target does not mention treaties or soft law instruments which could help stakeholders to define their content. Moreover, the choice of using the expression "fundamental freedoms" instead of "fundamental rights" raises multiple questions regarding how monitoring will be pursued with such a vague definition. Probably, the compromise between Member states was reached at the expenses of a clear commitment with time-bound targets and will be only through a definition of solid and innovative indicators that this trend could be reverted.

As for the Declaration Introduction, whose main aim is to provide a framework to interpret SDGs, HR are not cited as much as it expected. They are defined as one of the sources encouraging states to develop this Agenda.⁹ UDHR and Human Rights international treaties represent the main pillar for the SDGs, jointly with the Millennium Declaration and the Declaration on the Right to Development. However, the most innovative statements in the Draft about the connexions between SDGs and Human Rights disappeared in the final text. The idea that "the Agenda is to be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of states under international law"¹⁰ and that "the Agenda encompasses all human rights" simply vanished and had

⁹ UN, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, par. 10.

¹⁰ Final draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda, shared by co-facilitators on 8 July 2015, par.17. Source: http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/07/080715_Post-2015-Final-Draft-of-the-Outcome-Document.pdf

been replaced by more cautious reaffirmation of States' obligation to respect, protect and promote Human Rights and fundamental freedoms¹¹.

In a nutshell, States missed an occasion to reaffirm the interdependence and indivisibility of all HR and the interlinkages existing between economic and environmental dimensions of Sustainable Development and the promotion of all fundamental rights acknowledged by core international instruments.

3. Human rights indicators and their peculiarities. Existing frameworks and possible criticism in assessing international obligations.

The end of the 20th century brought a kind of managing approach in international institutions. World leaders started to set targets in different areas, such as global health, women rights and especially in development cooperation (MDGs represent a perfect example of that). Doing so, it became urgent to individuate indicators able to monitor the progresses made. Also Human rights advocates and scholars called upon the necessity to develop human rights indicators, in order to monitor States and International Organization (especially IFIs) compliance with their Human rights obligation. Also, as De Beco noticed¹², the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action stressed their potential role in measuring progress towards the realization of human rights.¹³ Unfortunately, at that time the use of statistics in HR monitoring was currently very poor and no consensus was achieved in core issues such as methodology¹⁴.

However, in 2002 OHCHR issued a pioneering work, *The Draft Guidelines on a Human Rights Approach to Poverty*¹⁵. This document contains not only human-rights based indicators, but also targets linked to the indicators and constitute the first edition of a series of publications of OHCHR on this topic, which became pivotal. Nowadays, OHCHR's approach represents a point of benchmark for all stakeholders interested in human rights indicators, due to its solid methodological framework. Accordingly to its definition, the peculiarity of human rights indicators is not that discrimination is embodied in every single indicator, nor that human rights language explicitly defines the indicators themselves, but rather that indicators are meant to assess the presence of human rights principles. Another distinctive feature of human rights indicators is that, compared to development indicators, they devote special attention to process and conduct.¹⁶

¹¹ UN, *Transforming our world*, ibidem, par. 19.

¹² Gauthier De Beco, «Human Rights Indicators: From Theoretical Debate to Practical Application», *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 5, n.º 2 (2013): 380-97.

¹³ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, 25 June 1993, A/Conf.157/23, endorsed by UN General Assembly resolution 48/121, 20 December 1993, Part II, para. 98.

¹⁴ Jesús García Cívico, «Qué es un indicador de derechos humanos y cómo se utiliza?», *Derechos y Libertades: revista de filosofía del derecho y derechos humanos*. Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, n.º 24 (2011), p. 202 y seg.

¹⁵ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies*, 10 September 2002, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f8298544.html> [accessed 17 August 2016]

¹⁶ Siobhán Alice McInerney-Lankford, *Human rights indicators in development: an introduction*, (A World Bank Study) (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2010).

OHCHR distinguishes three different categories of human rights indicators, depending on the aim they are supposed to pursue. First, structural indicators “help in capturing the acceptance, intent and commitment of the State to undertake measures in keeping with its human rights obligations”¹⁷. Meanwhile, process and outcome indicators respectively assess from on side the policies and specific measures carried out by the duty bearers to implement their commitments and from the other the results of state efforts in widening/extending the enjoyment of human rights. The first category could be defined as *de jure* compliance indicators, while the others represent a kind of *de facto* compliance ones.

Currently, human rights indicators are still poorly used by stakeholders. Their use in State party reports to the international human rights monitoring mechanisms is encouraging but limited to few cases, namely to South American countries. As stated by De Beco¹⁸, the debate about them rarely leaves the academia. Their use by NGOs is also spotty, due to the very little training available for them and also because of “the absence of real understanding of how they are constructed, what the variety of options are, no consciousness of their faults and limitations”¹⁹.

Thede, in particular, is quite pessimistic about the definition and use of indicators for human rights. She highlights not only the challenges arising from the development of an adequate definition in this field, but also from data collection²⁰. Caceres, more systematically, criticizes the quantitative and productivist approach expressed by those indicators and that undermining, in his opinion, the whole concept of human rights.²¹

Many of these criticisms are acceptable and well-founded, and it is granted that the subjectivity of human rights generates challenges in the development of a solid and science-based monitoring framework. However, it is indisputable that the use of indicators entails a big opportunity for all stakeholders in monitoring State compliance for a wide range of activities, such as advocacy, production of reports, developing policies etc., and should be not be restricted to few academics anymore.

4. Human rights monitoring in SDGs Follow-Up: pros and cons of indicators.

IAEG-SDGs’ mandate for developing a solid monitoring system based on indicators for post-2015 Development Agenda is somehow still on the way. Even though the Resolution “Transforming our World” was adopted by UNGA in September 2015, the proposed global indicator framework was agreed during the 47th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission which ended last March 11th ²². It was previsible, and many Member states preferred IEAG took its time instead of rushing and risk leaving things back. Moreover, it was stated that indicators should be submitted to

¹⁷ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Human Rights Indicators*, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁸ Gauthier De Beco, «Human Rights Indicators...», op. cit., p. 380

¹⁹ Nancy Thede, «Human rights and statistics: Some reflections on the no-man’s-land between concept and indicator», *Statistical Journal of the UN Economic Commission for Europe* 18, n.º 2/3 (June 2001): 259.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 265.

²¹ E. Caceres, *La Necesidad de Instrumentos Cualitativos*, pp. 82–84 in CEDAL, *Indicadores para la Vigilancia Social de los DESC*. Lima, Perú, 1999, cited by Nancy Thede in «Human rights and statistics...», op. cit., p. 266

²² ECOSOC, Statistical Commission, *Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators*, E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1, 19th February 2016.

review over the next years with the aim to resolve weaknesses which might emerge. NGOs considerations of the current SDGs indicators framework are quite positive, but with some exceptions. It has been noticed that ambition declines significantly from goals to targets, and it drops from targets to indicators.²³ Is public ambition therefore offset by technical necessities or we were not able to overcome existing quantitative approach? In addition, qualitative indicators for global monitoring are still missing.

Maybe the criticisms highlighted by both group of actors, human rights advocates versus statistics, could invite to make a step beyond in indicators debate. Currently, creating a solid and science-based indicators framework for measuring human rights could transform itself in a cul-de-sac with no solution, and it could also be the reason why important HR advocacy organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch decided no to use indicators for their purposes.

In 1990 Danilo Türk²⁴ endorsed the importance of indicators in the promotion and respect of economic, social and cultural rights, even if at that time no UN approach to human rights indicators was identifiable. Since then, multiple General Comments of ECOSOC²⁵ invited States more and more firmly to develop national indicators for monitoring the rights granted by the Covenant and to integrate benchmarks in their periodic reports. Thus, Rosga and Satterthwaie²⁶ clearly highlight how CESCR at first only suggested to the Member States that benchmarks might be “useful”, but from 1999 affirms that including indicators is a treaty obligation.

Since when Türk wrote his report, many springs have passed by. In 2006 he presented a Report outlining a conceptual and methodological framework for identifying quantitative indicators for monitoring compliance by States parties with international human rights treaties. After several editions, OHCHR indicators constitute nowadays the only human rights monitoring framework universally acknowledged. However, this well-known framework presents several criticisms, especially from an ideological perspective.

As affirmed by Rosga and Satterthwaie, OHCHR approach seems vulnerable because it avoids the authority of its indicators issue.²⁷ The above-mentioned scholars highlight that the human factor disappeared while it should play a fundamental role both in translating human rights legal obligations into indicators and then in their choice. Who will be then accountable for that? It seems the case for a perfect crime, where a monitoring process becomes a mere technical process, with no political or legal elements.²⁸

Anyway, all indicators entail unquestionable opportunities in monitoring States' compliance, and should not be dismissed only because of the lack in a general

²³ Barbara Adams and Karen Judd, «2030 Agenda and the SDGs: Indicator framework, monitoring and reporting», *Global Policy Watch*, n. 10, 18 March 2016, p. 5.

²⁴ Special Rapporteur Danilo Türk, «The New International Economic Order and the Promotion of Human Rights, Realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Progress Report Prepared by Mr. Danilo Türk, Special Rapporteur», U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1990/19 (July 6, 1990).

²⁵ ECOSOC, CESCR, General Comment No. 13, The Right to Education, 52, U.N. Doc. E/C.12/1999/10 (Dec. 8, 1999); more recently, see the 2005 General Comments on the Equal Right of Men and Women to the Enjoyment of All Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Right to Work, and the Right of Everyone to Benefit from the Protection of the Moral and Material Interests Resulting from any Scientific, Literary or Artistic Production of which He or She is the Author, and the 2008 General Comment on the Right to Social Security.

²⁶ AnnJannette Rosga and Margaret L. Satterthwaie, «The Trust in Indicators: Measuring Human Rights», *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 27, n.° 2 (2009): 253.

²⁷ *Ibidem*

²⁸ see Nils Brunsson y Bengt Jacobsson, *A World of Standards* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

methodology²⁹. On the contrary, the Rosga and Satterthwaite's proposal about different categories of indicators seems quite interesting. On the one side, treaty bodies might focus on the development of outcome indicators, while States could demonstrate their own commitment by presenting national process indicators.³⁰ This distinction could respond to the criticisms of the need for national as well as more accountable and dynamic indicators.

My own proposal focuses on framing these indicators perspective in the SDGs monitoring process. The current definition of the post-2015 Agenda's monitoring and follow-up still does not consider any of these possibilities, leaving stakeholders, Member States, NGOs and UN treaty bodies as mavericks, free to use indicators and do their jobs without any coordination. The main monitoring body is the High Level Political Forum, assisted by ECOSOC and UNGA. No prescription has been released about the role that Treaty bodies should play in monitoring SDGs accomplishment in their specific field of action.

Moreover, as established in the Declaration "Transforming our World", national SDGs reports will be totally voluntary. On the contrary, submitting national reports to Treaty bodies is a legal obligation for States parties. If we avoid to frame SDGs targets in treaty bodies monitoring, it will be a missed occasion to ensure a real rights-based approach to the new UN Development Agenda. Moreover, it would not be the first time that commitments from a development agenda (which are no binding norms) have appeared in CESCR final assessment to national reports. In fact, in 2004, the Committee highlighted how Spain did not respect its commitments in allocating 0.7 percent of GDP to Official Development Assistance, as established by the UN.³¹

Mainstreaming the monitoring of SDGs accomplishments in human rights could be definitely a better idea than leave it in the hands of a Political Forum with no chance to understand deeply what is really going on. HLPF could maintains its coordination role, while treaty bodies focus on how SDGs implementation is improving human rights enjoyment, also reaffirming their legal basis.

This new perspective, however, faces multiple vulnerabilities. Firstly, this monitoring system will still be State-centered, letting private sector in a grey zone where its impact on human rights and on the implementation of SDGs will be not sufficiently accountable. This is a major argument, namely for NGOs, who are interested in rebalancing the private sector participation in the field of international cooperation. UN and Member states made a plea to private companies and corporations to participate in financing the Post-2015 Development Agenda. On the contrary, the evaluation of their social responsibility in SDGs implementation is not mentioned in the monitoring framework, leading to strong criticisms.

Secondly, it has been identified the risk that, "to the extent governments do actively try to meet benchmarks and standards set in relation to international human rights treaties, the incentive to demonstrate success--or, say, "progressive realization"-according to given indicators may become greater than any incentive to substantively ensure the

²⁹ Jesús García Cívico, «Qué es un indicador de derechos humanos», op. cit., p. 217.

³⁰ AnnJannette Rosga and Margaret L. Satterthwaite, «The Trust in Indicators», op. cit., p. 311.

³¹ CESCR, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, par. 10, E/C.12/1/Add.99

fulfillment and/or enjoyment of human rights themselves.”³² In other words, the visibility that future progresses may enjoy could generate some rigging instincts in State parties. However, it does not seem to be just a problem of SDGs monitoring, but also of the whole monitoring system based on States’ reports.

In a nutshell, the use of indicators and benchmarks coming from a non binding instrument might be questionable, if related to a monitoring process based on legally binding rules, as those implemented by core treaty bodies.

Finally, it would be questionable to insert targets and indicators developed into a non binding instrument, such as SDGs, as benchmarks in the framework of the monitoring process of core treaty bodies, which veil on the implementation and respect of legal obligations of State parties. However, as previously demonstrated, treaty bodies already take into account such benchmarks, especially when supported by an extremely wide community of States, and this is the case of SDGs.

Conclusions

Human right monitoring has never been such a trending topic as in the last few years. After the MDGs experience, all stakeholders became aware of the need for a more solid human rights-based approach to Development as well as a better monitoring of the impact of development programs and Member States’ compliance. Thus, the creation of a science-based methods based on indicators sounded particularly attractive, both to UN bodies and to Civil Society Organizations. However, applying statistics to rights which are ipso facto undetermined and multidimensional gives rise to several problems. Academics, professional and policy makers debate strongly on the elaboration of a sound and universal system of monitoring for human rights. Finally, in 2006 OHCHR presented its first edition of “Indicators for Human Rights”, which is still considered one of the most comprehensive and accountable proposal in this field.

However, after the approval of the new UN Development Agenda in September 2015, HR monitoring has not been mentioned. Global attention was focused on the IAEG mission to develop a wide range of indicators to monitor 169 targets and 17 goals, but no one proposed to include the already existing monitoring systems into the SDGs Follow-up. Currently, States converged on the voluntariness of national SDGs Reports, which will be analyzed yearly by the High Level Political Forum. Moreover, IAEG did not include any of the indicators developed by OHCHR relevant to SDG 16, the goal dedicated to the realization of a more peaceful and inclusive societies (implicitly to human rights and human security promotion), which could have positively added a more juridical-based approach to monitoring.

Due to the fact that several Treaty bodies, such as CESCR, already consider international agreed benchmarks in evaluating States Reports, this paper proposes a stronger integration of Treaty bodies in SDGs’ targets monitoring. Even if this option is not immune to criticisms, it relies on strong arguments supporting it. First of all, Member States are going to submit mandatory States’ Reports to Treaty bodies anyway, and framing them in the SDGs monitoring could avoid States to present an unsustainable

³² AnnJannette Rosga and Margaret L. Satterthwaite, *Ibidem*, p. 286.

number of Reports, especially for low-budget countries. This could also avoid overlappings between involved international institutions. Moreover, it could allow a higher level of State ownership while developing indicators, but also deeper coordination and impartial overview on human rights implementation while implementing SDGs.

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