Quantitative Human Rights Indicators
- A survey of major initiatives

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1. This paper provides an overview and assessment of some major attempts and approaches to develop quantitative human rights and related indicators that have been variously used for human rights monitoring in recent times. A major objective of the paper is to show the depth and scale of information and indicators that have been used by States, intergovernmental organisations and civil society in this context. The paper surveys initiatives on indicators that are explicitly anchored in human rights standards, as well as those that are commonly categorised as “socio-economic statistics”. More specifically, the paper seeks to highlight the main categories of initiatives on human rights indicators, illustrate them with representative examples and analyse the elements that each category of initiatives could potentially bring to the process and methodology for human rights monitoring. This survey is by no means exhaustive. It has drawn from some recent attempts at mapping and surveys of human rights and related indicators and some earlier studies.1 A primary consideration in the selection and assessment of initiatives and the related indicators has been their suitability for use in monitoring the compliance of States parties with international human rights treaties.2 As a result the focus has essentially been on quantitative indicators that are based on objective methods of data collection and presentation.3

2. The introductory section discusses the notion and usages of the word “indicator” in the context of human rights monitoring. This is followed by a brief analysis on the need and rationale for quantitative human rights indicators. The second and core section of the paper surveys some major initiatives on human rights monitoring that use quantitative indicators. Broadly these are categorised in four groups, namely initiatives using events-based data on human rights violations; socio-economic and other administrative statistics; household perception and opinion surveys; and initiatives using data based on expert judgements. The third section of the paper reviews initiatives taken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in identifying human rights indicators. In outlining the gaps in the available approaches the final section outlines some conclusions and considerations for a possible approach - conceptual and methodological - to develop indicators for human rights monitoring.

* The views expressed in this paper are in an individual capacity and not necessarily those of the organisation for which the authors work.


2 In particular, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC); International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (MWC).

3 In addition to the need for monitoring the implementation of the human rights treaties, human rights indicators may also be required for evaluating development programming, as well as aid assessment. These objectives though related, demand to some extent a different focus on the design and selection of human rights indicators. We visit this issue briefly in the concluding section.
I. Human rights indicators, notion and rationale

3. The general notion of the word “indicator” constrains all indicators to have a common purpose, namely to provide specific information on the state or condition of an event, activity or an outcome. However, it allows indicators to assume various forms, of a qualitative or a quantitative nature. This in turn creates the scope for plurality in the understanding of the concept and methodologies to build indicators, which sometimes can be a source of confusion. In the context of this paper, it is necessary to have a minimum common understanding of the types of indicators that are the focus of this survey and are seen as useful to support the monitoring of the international human rights instruments.

4. In a background paper for the Human Development Report 2000 (HDR 2000), Maria Green describes the existence of two main usages of the word “indicator” within the human rights community. One usage considers indicators narrowly as an equivalent of “statistics” and the other, a more “thematic” usage, covers any information relevant to observance or enjoyment of a specific right. Thus, for instance, the former Special Rapporteur for the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), Danilo Türk pointed out that “the word indicator refers to statistical data which attempts to provide or ‘indicate’ (usually based on some form of numerical quantification) the prevailing circumstances at a given place at a given point.” In this tradition there have been attempts to identify and develop quantitative indicators, such as enrolment rates for the school going age-group of children, indicators on ratification of treaties, proportion of seats held by women in national parliament and incidence of extra-judicial killings/torture. At the same time, one finds a widespread use of ‘checklists’ or a set of questions as indicators, which sometimes seek to complement or elaborate numerical information on the realisation of human rights. In this instance, the usage of the word “indicator” refers to information beyond statistics. In the agencies of the United Nations system and in the human rights community many experts have often favoured such an interpretation of the word indicator.

5. The two main usages of the word “indicator” in the human rights community do not reflect two opposed approaches. Given the complexity of assessing compliance with human rights standards, all relevant qualitative and quantitative information is potentially useful. Quantitative indicators can facilitate qualitative evaluations by measuring the magnitude of certain events. Reciprocally, qualitative information can complement the interpretation of quantitative indicators.

Quantitative human rights indicators

6. The focus of the present paper is primarily on the kind of “statistical” indicators. The three expressions, namely statistical, quantitative or numerical indicators are often used interchangeably. In this paper and unless specified, the term “quantitative indicator” is used to designate any kind of indicators that are or can be expressed in quantitative form, such as numbers, percentages or indices. Accordingly, the survey also covers such initiatives and the corresponding indicators of a qualitative nature (generally expressed in narrative form) that

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6 Some examples of the second usage of the word indicator are the “checklist of indicators of political freedom” in HDR 1992 (see Box 2.2, p. 31) or the sets of “qualitative indicators” (used jointly with “quantitative indicators”) in the Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF).
have been or can be transformed into quantitative data. For instance, the checklist of indicators for political freedom in HDR 1992 is an initiative that uses cardinal scales to obtain indices from qualitative information.

7. The emphasis on quantitative indicators is guided by the consideration to promote a monitorable and objective assessment of the realisation of human rights. The use of appropriate quantitative human rights indicators would help tracking over time, in a consistent manner, the steps being undertaken by States parties to meet their commitments under the provisions of relevant instruments. It would also help formulating and guiding public policy in the promotion and protection of human rights. In that sense, such indicators are the critical bridge between the human rights discourse and the development discourse.

8. The surveyed quantitative indicators could, a priori, all be termed “human rights indicators”, as they are explicitly or implicitly anchored in the human rights standards. They, however, reflect human rights norms and principles to various extents. We look at human rights indicators as information that is presented quantitatively and that can be related to human rights norms and standards; that addresses and reflects the human rights concerns and principles; and that are used to assess and monitor promotion and protection of human rights. Defined in this manner there could be some indicators that are uniquely human rights indicators because they owe their existence to certain human rights norms or standards and are generally not used in other contexts. This could be the case, for instance, with an indicator like the number of extra-judicial killings, or the reported cases of torture by the police and the paramilitary forces, or the number of children who do not have access to primary education because of discrimination. At the same time, there could be a large number of other indicators such as socio-economic statistics (e.g. the human development indicators developed by the UNDP) that could meet (at least implicitly) all the definitional requirements of a human rights indicator as laid out here. In all these cases, to the extent that such indicators relate to the human rights norms and principles used for human rights assessment, it would be helpful to consider them as human rights indicators.

**Indicators in international legal framework**

9. At present, outside the human rights community, the most widely recognised and used human rights indicator is, perhaps, the state of ratification of international human rights standards. The human rights monitoring mechanisms, however, refer to a wide range of indicators (qualitative and quantitative) that are reflected in the human rights normative framework comprising the various international instruments, their elaborations through general comments, reporting guidelines and concluding observations, for use in monitoring the realisation of human rights. While some quantitative indicators are explicitly quoted in the human rights treaties, the general comments and recommendations adopted by the “Treaty bodies” specify the type and role of these indicators. The guidelines for reports by States parties also represent a complementary source that lists the type of indicators to be provided by States.

10. At a treaty level, consider, for instance, article 10 of the CEDAW, on the right to education. It contains a provision for the reduction of “female student drop out rate”. In the

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7 Information on this indicator can be found on OHCHR website: [http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/docs/RatificationStatus.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/docs/RatificationStatus.pdf). This information is often replicated in other domains and analytical frameworks seeking to strengthen or incorporate human rights dimensions in their activities. For instance, the UNDP Human Development Report contains tables on the status (ratification, accession, succession and signature) of the major international human rights instruments.

8 Reports prepared by the “special procedures” of the Commission on Human Rights have also referred to or made use of quantitative indicators. Works of some special rapporteurs are referred to in this report.
ICESCR, article 12 states that to achieve the full realisation of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the “steps to be taken by the States parties shall include those necessary for the provision for the reduction of the stillbirth-rate and infant mortality”.\(^9\) Similarly, article 24(2) of the ICCPR states that “every child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have a name”. A similar provision is contained in the CRC (article 7(1)). Such references to statistical or quantitative indicators in treaty provisions contribute to the definition of the content of the concerned right and also help reinforcing its operational aspects. Thus, while recording of births is of direct importance to delivering a birth certificate, which is often a condition for the enjoyment of other rights, the registration of all children represents an acknowledgment by the State of the importance attached to every individual and of their status under the law. The same is perhaps true for most other official statistics (e.g. causes of death statistics, measures of income inequality and unemployment rates).

11. In the case of the general comments and recommendations, for instance, the Committee for the ICESCR recommends States parties “to set specific goals or benchmarks with respect to the reduction of infant mortality, the extent of vaccination of children, the intake of calories per person, the number of persons per health-care provider, etc.”\(^10\) Given the importance of “progressive realisation” of the concerned rights, the same Committee underlines the importance of quantitative data to assess adequately the progress over time. Moreover, for the compilation of indicators, it recommends the collaboration of States parties with United Nations and other relevant international agencies.\(^11\) The CEDAW Committee states that “statistical information is absolutely necessary in order to understand the real situation of women in each of the States parties to the Convention”.\(^12\) The same Committee recommends that social and economic surveys should formulate their questionnaire in such a way that data can be disaggregated according to gender; that States parties should encourage the compilation of statistics on domestic violence\(^13\); and that States parties should provide quantitative data showing the percentage of women enjoying the rights in relation to political and public life; and encourage the implementation of “time use surveys”.\(^14\) Similarly, the Committee for the CRC emphasises the importance of detailed disaggregated data.\(^15\) In its general comment on the prohibition of torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the Human Rights Committee states that reports of States parties should provide statistics that relate to the administration of justice: on the number of complaints and how they have been dealt with.\(^16\)

\(^9\) The related General Comment 14 points out that, according to WHO, the stillbirth rate is no longer commonly used, infant and under-five mortality rates are being measured instead.
\(^{10}\) See General Comment No. 1. In the same comment, the Committee points out that global benchmarks are of limited use, whereas national or other more specific benchmarks can provide an extremely valuable indication of progress.
\(^{11}\) See, for instance, General Comments No. 12 (right to food), 13 (right to education) and 14 (right to health).
\(^{12}\) General Recommendation No. 9.
\(^{13}\) General Recommendation No. 19.
\(^{14}\) General Recommendation No. 23. Time use surveys are carried out primarily by official statistical institutes and measure the amount of time people spend doing various activities, such as paid work, childcare, volunteering, commuting, and socializing.
\(^{15}\) General Comment No. 4 and No. 5. In the latter, the Committee for the CRC also points out that in many cases, only children themselves are in a position to indicate whether their rights are being fully recognized and realized. Therefore, and with appropriate safeguards, interviewing children, according to the Committee, is likely to be an important way of finding out to what extent some of the rights of the child are respected within the family, in school and so on.
\(^{16}\) General Comment No. 20.
12. The reporting guidelines are designed to list the type of qualitative and quantitative data to be compiled and provided by States parties while reporting on their compliance with the relevant treaties. The current guidelines are composed of a core part, common to the 7 human rights treaties, which asks States parties to provide quantitative information on the general socio-economic situation of the population and its main social groups. In addition, all treaty-specific reporting guidelines ask for quantitative indicators of direct relevance to the implementation of the concerned treaty. Though specified only in general terms, most of these indicators belong primarily to the category of statistics that have to be compiled by governmental bodies, through administrative records and surveys.  

13. We now look at some major initiatives on quantitative human rights indicators and assess them for their usefulness in monitoring the compliance of State parties with international human rights instruments.

II. Some initiatives on quantitative human rights indicators

13. In the context of this survey, based on the data-generating mechanisms and the methods employed to translate the available information into indicators, the paper identifies four broad categories of initiatives on quantitative human rights indicators. These are:

   (A) events-based data on human rights violations;
   (B) socio-economic and other administrative statistics;
   (C) household perception and opinion surveys;
   (D) data based on expert judgements.

For each of these four categories, major initiatives are identified and assessed for their contribution to the process and the methodology for monitoring human rights. In undertaking this assessment, the surveyed initiatives and the related indicators have been analysed for their conformity to the relevant statistical principles and criteria, as well as for their coverage of international human rights instruments, the relevant provisions and the human rights principles.

14. In terms of statistical adequacy, indicators can be assessed for their reliability and validity. Reliability of an indicator refers to consistency in the estimate or the value of an indicator if the data-generating mechanism employed for devising an indicator is repeated. For instance, if a question is asked for a second time to the same person and it produces an identical response, everything else being equal, then the question/response could be considered as a reliable indicator. This often is not the case if the question is formulated in an ambiguous manner. Moreover, reliability of an indicator is affected by biases in data-generating mechanisms, which, inter-alia, could be the result of misspecification of questions or definitions, apprehensions of the respondents and non-representativeness of the sample. The notion of validity refers to the truthfulness of information provided by the estimate or the value of an indicator. In other words, the criterion of validity requires an indicator to effectively measure what it is supposed to measure. Though assessment of indicators for reliability and validity are not pursued rigorously in the context of this paper, where possible, broad conclusions on the suitability of surveyed indicators on these criteria are drawn. The other statistical criteria that are also considered for assessment of the initiatives include  

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17 As a support for the subsequent discussion, a list of human rights is provided in Annex 1. The list aims at giving an overview of the scope of human rights. It was derived mainly from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), ICCPR and ICESCR.
availability and periodicity of data; disaggregation and decomposability of data; amenability to use in international comparisons; and transparency of the methodology.

15. From a human rights perspective, the initiatives and the corresponding indicators can be assessed for their coverage of human rights standards and principles. In keeping with the suggested definition of a human rights indicator in para 8, the linkages of indicators with international human rights instruments, as well as the relevant general comments can be analysed with a view to assess their normative and conceptual basis. The initiatives can be assessed for their ability to capture, in the choice and design of indicators, the human rights principles of non-discrimination; indivisibility and interdependence; accountability; and recourse and access to redress. One can examine how the human rights aspects of “progressive realisation” and “violation/denial” are reflected in the selection of indicators, and the amenability of the indicators to disaggregation at levels of contextually relevant vulnerable population groups. One can also analyse the extent to which the initiatives provide indicators to capture enjoyment of human rights at an individual level (“right-holders”), on the one hand, and the obligations of the duty-holders to respect, protect and fulfil their commitments in the realisation of human rights, on the other.

A. Events-based data on human rights violations

16. Events-based data on human rights violations (or events-based data for short), in the context of this paper, refer to qualitative or quantitative data that can be linked to events characterised by the occurrence of human rights violations. The collected information primarily describes acts of human rights violations and identifies victims and perpetrators. The information is recorded in standardised fashion, using common definitions and classifications that permit the compilation and consolidation of the relevant data.\(^\text{18}\) The data sources in this case include testimonies of victims, witnesses, information provided by the media and reports of States, civil society organisations and other interest groups.

17. Quantitative indicators derived from events-based data usually present the incidence of human rights violations in terms of the number of victims.\(^\text{19}\) These violations are identified and determined by applying human rights standards as codified in the various treaties. Historically, initiatives using events-based data have focused on civil and political rights, such as the right to life, personal integrity, liberty and security of person. However, more recently, information on violation/denial of economic, social and cultural rights has also been collected using this method. Events-based data initiatives have been primarily developed by non-governmental organisations that collect information with the intention to prevent and denounce human rights violations and to provide assistance to victims.\(^\text{20}\) Quantitative analyses, carried out in the frameworks of official “truth and reconciliation” commissions have also contributed to the development of standardised documentation tools to support collection of

\(^{18}\) Examples of quantitative indicator or data are “age” and “weight” of a victim; qualitative indicator or categorical data are “sex” and “nationality” of a victim, and categories of human rights violations (e.g. “arbitrary killing”) that can be used to estimate levels of incidence.

\(^{19}\) For instance, an indicator based on events-based data could be the “reported number of persons arbitrarily executed”. It would capture the number of persons killed by an agent of the State or any other person acting under Government authority or with its complicity, tolerance, or acquiescence, but without any or due judicial process. Similarly there could be an indicator on the reported number of starvation deaths due to crop failure.

\(^{20}\) In collecting this information, particularly when the events are dated, in addition to the use of information reported in the media or to the redress mechanism, use of structured household surveys has also been made.
information using this method.\textsuperscript{21} Among the present initiatives in this category, HURIDOCS (Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems, International) presents perhaps the most comprehensive set of standardised tools (including computerised systems) for recording events-based information on human rights violations.\textsuperscript{22}

18. An example of the use of event-based data to monitor human rights is the compilation of quantitative indicators of the Chilean Human Rights Commission (which was created in 1979) during the repressive military regime. To demonstrate the magnitude of human rights violations during this period, the Commission published monthly reports indicating the number of known victims for a few categories of human rights violations including “intimidation/harassment”, “arbitrary political detention”, “torture/mistreatment”, “disappearance” and “killing”.\textsuperscript{23} Similarly the work undertaken under the aegis of American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for providing technical assistance to official truth commissions (Haiti, South Africa, Guatemala, Peru, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste) and the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, on assessing and quantifying the incidence of human rights violations have brought to the forefront the efficacy of this method in monitoring human rights violations.\textsuperscript{24}

19. In Nepal, the Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) has been producing a \textit{Human Right Yearbook} since 1992.\textsuperscript{25} Using HURIDOCS tools, INSEC has recorded information on events related to different kinds of human rights violations. In its yearbook for 2004, INSEC provides different quantitative indicators, including the number of victims killed (disaggregated by sex, age, social classes, last occupation); number of displaced persons; number of people who reported torture; number of disappearances; and number of arrests. Among other organisations that have used similar methods and tools to compile their reports. There is, for instance, the \textit{Center for the study of violence and reconciliation} in the framework of the Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, the \textit{Justice and Peace Commission} in Haiti, and the \textit{Database Center for North Korean Human Rights}.

20. The HURIDOCS network of human rights organisations has developed Events Standard Formats for the documentation and communication of information on human rights violations.\textsuperscript{20} The first version of these Events Standard Formats was published in 1993. In this system, the documentation on human rights violations is classified and organised around the following key concepts:\textsuperscript{27}

- An \textbf{event} is something that happens, with a beginning and an end, and which progresses until its logical conclusion. It can be a single act, a series of related acts, or a combination of related acts happening together. For an event to be included in human rights monitoring, at least one act that it contains should be qualified as a human rights violation (e.g. arbitrary arrest, which is a violation of the right to liberty), or similar to such an act (e.g. legal arrest).

\textsuperscript{22} \url{http://www.huridocs.org}
\textsuperscript{23} The example of Chile is quoted by R. B. Reiter, M. V. Zunzunegui, and Jose Quiroga, “Guidelines for Field Reporting of Basic Human Rights Violations”, chapter 4 of the publication “Human rights and statistics, Getting the record straight”. \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{24} See for details \url{http://www.benetech.org}
\textsuperscript{25} \url{http://www.insec.org.np}
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid.}
An act is a single piece of movement or action, usually involving force. Usually, an act is committed by a person (an individual or a group) against another, in which case it is referred to as an act of commission. Act can also mean the non-performance of an expected or required movement or action, in which case it is referred to as an act of omission.

The victim is the person (individual or group) who is the object of an act.

The perpetrator is the person (individual or group) who commits an act that constitutes a violation. Perpetrators can be a state or non-state entities. The means used could be concrete arms such as guns, or more abstract processes such as lawmaking.

21. For collection and recording of information on each of these elements, standard formats are available that include details on location, date and time of acts, the different kinds of involvement of the perpetrator in a particular act, sources of information, biographic details and attributes (e.g. age, sex, nationality) of victims, perpetrators, witnesses and other intervening parties. A computerised system of Events Standard Formats (WinEvsys) has also been developed to facilitate documentation. Thus, different sets of “controlled vocabularies”, termed “thesaurus”, have been elaborated for entry of data in the database. Generally classified by themes and grouped hierarchically, these thesauri are lists of terms or typologies for information on acts, victims, sources, locations, etc. With a codification system, these thesauri allow for precise categorisation of information, storage, retrieval and statistical analysis. For instance, among the various “micro-thesaurus” elaborated within the framework of HURIDOCS, the micro-thesaurus 4 provides a preliminary classification of acts of human rights violations. The first level of this micro-thesaurus is used to denote which right or cluster of rights is being violated, such as civil and political rights; rights of protected groups (children, persons with disabilities, minorities, etc.); and economic, social and cultural rights. The second and the following levels are used to refine and focus on the categorisation of the human rights violations. Given the variety of human rights violations and contexts, often the standard definitions and vocabularies in Events Standard Formats need to be adjusted for local situations. HURIDOCS has undertaken further research and development, in collaboration with the AAAS, to allow for a more systematic and standardised documentation on violations of economic, social and cultural rights.

22. In comparison to other categories of indicators discussed in this paper, a priori, the human rights dimension of indicators derived from events-based data is far more concrete as it is explicitly linked to the (non-compliance of) human rights standards. The use of event based data in uncovering gross and systematic violation of human rights, such as in the case of ‘truth and reconciliation commissions’ in many countries, including in the case of former Yugoslavia, has demonstrated the efficacy of the methodology for not only human rights monitoring but also for gathering hard evidence in support of administration of justice. The information that is compiled through the use of this method is often complementary to information captured through other means of data collection. Thus, for example, information presented through relevant socio-economic indicators compiled by government agencies may reflect the progressive realisation of human rights in a society, whereas information collected

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28 HURIDOCS defined a standard format as a “form consisting of fields, arranged in a pre-determined way, on which information can be recorded. The form can be on paper, or layout on a word processor, or it can be an entry layout within a database programme” (e.g. WinEvsys).

29 Annex 2 provides a list of the micro-thesauri available at HURIDOCS. The micro-thesaurus 4 is available at http://www.huridocs.org/mt4.htm

30 HURIDOCS and the American Association for the Advancement of Science have published a Thesaurus of potential violations of economic, social and cultural rights, which has a version available on-line at http://shr.aaas.org/thesaurus/
through the use of event-based data could complement the former by focusing on the incidence of violation or denial of human rights, often within the same society or population group. Yet indicators derived from event-based data suffer from some obvious shortcomings. Given the inclination of some States to hide information on their failure to fulfil their human rights obligations, this category of indicators may under-estimate the incidence of human rights violations. In some cases, this bias problem may prevent valid comparisons, over time or across regions. Moreover, due to inadequate samples on account of constraints on reporting and recording of the relevant events, it may not always be possible to infer and assess the overall human rights situation at the population level using just event based data. Finally, though recent attempts have shown that this method could also be applied for monitoring the protection of economic social and cultural rights, it has mainly and most effectively been used for monitoring the violation of civil and political rights only. A major problem in this context comes from the difficulty in establishing consensual standard definitions on violations of human rights, particularly so in the area of economic, social and cultural rights. The use of standard formats for recording data, harmonised definitions and appropriate classifications of human rights violations is critical for improving the reliability of collected information and for monitoring human rights under this method. At the same time, a structured approach to the collection of information is also essential for enabling aggregation and decomposition of data and for intra- and inter-temporal comparisons of indicators.

B. Socio-economic and other administrative statistics

23. In general, socio-economic and other administrative statistics (socio-economic statistics for short) refer to aggregated data sets and indicators based on objective quantitative or qualitative information (i.e. information that can be observed and verified, such as wage, age, sex and race) related to standards of living and other facets of life. Collected through administrative records and statistical surveys, socio-economic statistics are compiled mainly by or in collaboration with national statistical institutes and international organisations mandated by States, with a view to address the information requirements of policy formulation and implementation. The status and role of these agencies may differ, but they share the function of compiling, interpreting and disseminating official statistics.

24. In the context of human rights monitoring, unlike event-based data on human rights violations, which are reported primarily by civil society organisations and are intrinsically based on human rights norms, socio-economic statistics do not formally count events or acts of human rights violations or the number of victims of these violations. Moreover, their links to human rights standards are not always explicit. The socio-economic statistics are most commonly compiled by States to cover fields more relevant to economic, social and cultural rights than to civil and political rights. There is, however, an important body of work on criminal justice statistics, within the domain of socio-economic statistics that relates explicitly to the civil and political rights and constitutes an important source of information that complements event-based data for monitoring of these rights. Indeed it demonstrates that suitably designed socio-economic statistics can be equally useful in monitoring the promotion and protection of civil and political rights. The United Nations Handbook on social

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31 Problems of over-estimation are also possible. In general, it would be desirable to have error margins or confidence intervals specified for such statistics, to facilitate their use as valid and reliable indicators.


33 There are also quantitative indicators that relate to the functioning of the political system, looking, for instance, at percentages of persons entitled to vote, voter participation by age and by sex, segments of population...
indicators provides a comprehensive list of fields\textsuperscript{34} in outlining the scope of socio-economic statistics. The list includes: population composition and change; human settlements, housing and geographical distribution of population; health and health services, impairment and disability, nutrition; learning and educational services; economic activity and population not economically active; socio-economic groups and social mobility; income, consumption and wealth; social security and welfare services; leisure, culture and communications; time use; public order and safety; natural environment; and political activities. A quick comparison with the listing of human rights (see Annex 1) makes the links and the potential correspondence between human rights and the fields for socio-economic statistics quite apparent.

25. In terms of methodology for collecting information and sources of socio-economic statistics, the following categories could be distinguished: population, housing and agricultural censuses; household sample surveys; civil registration and other registers; administrative data collected by government agencies and ministries; and non-governmental administrative data.\textsuperscript{35} While each of these methodologies have their comparative advantage in accessing and presenting relevant information on the various identified fields of socio-economic statistics, in most cases, all of them are used simultaneously and in a complementary manner by the national agencies responsible for relevant information and indicators. Thus, for instance, Census or complete enumeration, as well as civil registration system is often the method used for demographic statistics, whereas household sample surveys are extensively used for compiling information on socio-economic profile of population.\textsuperscript{36} It is generally agreed that the organisations compiling official statistics are expected to be impartial, neutral and objective. In 1994, the UN Statistical Commission\textsuperscript{37} adopted the \textit{Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics} (see Annex 3). These principles do not specify the statistics to be compiled or the fields requiring statistical information, but aim primarily at setting general standards on procedures and methods to be followed by official statistical agencies for the collection and treatment of statistical data. In reference to these principles, the UN handbook of statistical organisation specifies that a “strong position of independence is essential for a statistical organisation in order to establish credibility among its users and create a relationship of mutual respect and trust. Collecting, analysing and disseminating statistical information is always seen as an activity distinct from policy-making activities.

realizing their right to vote and to be elected (e.g. women) and data on infrastructure related to conducting of elections/ polls.

\textsuperscript{34} Handbook on social indicators, Department of international economic and social affairs, Statistical Office, United Nations, pp. 15-17, 1989. ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/49.

\textsuperscript{35} See UN Handbook on Social Indicator.

\textsuperscript{36} In the absence of reliable registration systems for “vital events” (birth, death, marriage), household surveys can also represent an essential source of information. Household budget or consumer expenditure surveys and labour force surveys are specialized surveys carried out, at various time intervals, in most of the countries. Specific household surveys are often commissioned to capture information on issues such as, nutrition, illiteracy, housing, health and time use, as well as information on more subjective elements related to these areas (e.g. questions on food consumption habits; subjective measures of well-being). Although the frontier may not always be easy to draw, the measurement of subjective elements represents a characteristic of household perception and opinion surveys, which differ from usual household surveys compiled by official statistical institutes. We discuss this later in the paper.

\textsuperscript{37} The main functions of the UN Statistical Commission are to assist the Economic and Social Council: (a) in promoting the development of national statistics and the improvement of their comparability; (b) in the coordination of the statistical work of specialized agencies; (c) in development of the central statistical services of the Secretariat; (d) in advising the organs of the United Nations on general questions relating to the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical information; (e) in promoting the improvement of statistics and statistical methods generally.
26. At the national level, social and economic statistics are often compiled in pursuance of relevant legislations. At the international level, United Nations and other international conferences and summits have played an important role in the development of social statistics e.g. gender statistics have received impetus from the World Conferences on Women, similarly substantive work on environmental statistics has followed the global summits on the issue. The compilation of statistics by the various organisations is usually carried out using specific conceptual frameworks that are essentially geared to address their respective mandates. Over time as these mandates have evolved in response to changing national and international requirements, one can find, as noted in the following paragraphs, that national and international organisations are increasingly developing indicators to assess the process of policy implementation, as well as the level of progress achieved (often termed outcome). As we will see later in this paper, this has important implications for the development of human rights indicators. Besides, in the wake of the Secretary General’s reform of the UN system and the call for mainstreaming human rights in the implementation of their respective mandates, international agencies have taken steps to identify and devise indicators in relation to human rights goals. Among the United Nations agencies and programmes, there are long-standing initiatives on statistical indicators, particularly in the case of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In all these inter-governmental organisations work on quantitative data and indicators for monitoring progress related to their respective mandates can be linked to commitments of the States parties to corresponding international human rights instruments. Annex 4 lists international organisations (mainly United Nations and other agencies) that compile statistics on their core mandates and identifies very broadly the correspondence with relevant human rights and the vulnerable groups that are the focus of their interventions. In addition, it lists a few databases available at the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and other organisations.

Some national initiatives

27. Before highlighting the work on human rights and related indicators undertaken by inter-governmental organisations, we describe briefly some initiatives at the national level on the use of socio-economic statistics of relevance to human rights monitoring. One such initiative is that of the Human Rights Commission in South Africa (SAHRC). The SAHRC publishes reports on the situation of economic and social rights using socio-economic statistics as a tool for monitoring the compliance of the State with relevant human rights standards. For instance its 5th report (2002-2003) contains an extensive list of quantitative indicators for monitoring rights in the areas of housing, health, food, water, social security, education and environment. The report analyses budget information on allocations by sector, policy or programme and the level of expenditure against these allocations. Information has been compiled at the national and sub-national levels, based mainly on questionnaires sent to governmental bodies. Notwithstanding the gaps in information (e.g. limited time-series and disaggregation of data) and sometimes an excessive reliance on governmental sources (problem pointed out by the SAHRC itself), the attempt highlights the importance and need

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for quantitative indicators at the national level and “on the ground” for human rights assessment and monitoring of public policies and programmes.\textsuperscript{41}

28. Another recent example at the national level is the specific work on human rights indicators undertaken by the Ministry of Justice, Legislation and human rights of Benin.\textsuperscript{42} In collaboration with representatives of civil society and non-governmental organisations, quantitative indicators for monitoring the human rights situation in different regions of the country have been identified and compiled for various areas, such as administration of justice, housing, education and malnutrition. Many of these indicators are broadly similar to the category of socio-economic statistics generally recommended at an international level (e.g. enrolment rates in schools, anthropometric measures to assess malnutrition). Indicators, such as “the number of decisions taken by the constitutional court and related to human rights” have also been compiled; they, however, require further information to allow users to proceed to an adequate interpretation and assessment. The work undertaken in Benin on the development of a rigorous methodology, involving quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments, for monitoring the human rights situation in a participatory framework represents in many respects the kind of work that is required for supporting the monitoring of human rights at a national level.\textsuperscript{43}

International organisations and civil society initiatives

29. An example of the use of socio-economic statistics in monitoring human rights by non-governmental organisations is available in the annual report of Social Watch.\textsuperscript{44} This international network of NGOs, which emerged after the UN World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, assesses the implementation of international commitments on poverty eradication and gender equality in about 50 countries, using a large set of commonly used socio-economic statistics. This includes indicators on poverty, food and health security, women’s reproductive health, water and sanitation, education, information science and technology, gender equity, public expenditure and development aid. Information on the status of ratification of principal human rights treaties and status of official country reports to the UN human rights treaty bodies are also reproduced. The indicators have been compiled primarily from information available with the specialised UN agencies and programmes and the World Bank.\textsuperscript{45} Most of the quantitative indicators in the Social Watch report are predominantly “outcome” indicators and more directly relevant to the assessment of economic, social and cultural rights. Many of them correspond to the indicators identified for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{41} As an introduction to the specific analysis of economic and social rights, the report of the SAHRC also contains a short evaluation of relevant macroeconomic trends in the country.


\textsuperscript{43} In the framework of the RMIP (Rights-based Municipal Assessment Programme) carried out by the field presence of OHCHR in Bosnia-Herzegovina, an attempt is also being made with experts of different organisations on the ground to identify similar types of quantitative indicators as well as indicators of a more qualitative or narrative nature.

\textsuperscript{44} See http://www.socwatch.org/en/portada.htm

\textsuperscript{45} Social Watch has also developed two indices: a gender equity index and a quality of life index. Both indices are used to rank countries. The gender index is basically an average of the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), developed in the UNDP’s Human Development Reports. The quality of life index is an average of three sub-components, namely the percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel, percentage of children reaching fifth grade and mortality rate among children under five.

\textsuperscript{46} The list of MDGs’ indicators is available on the website of the United Nations Statistics Division: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp
30. **WHO** has contributed to the elaboration of international statistical classifications on health,\(^47\) in keeping with its constitutional mandate to establish and maintain statistical services and provide information in the field of health. It has been able to build a large statistical information base, which is reflected in the annual *World Health Reports*. The indicators and related information range from the aggregate indicators and composite measures on quality of life to statistics on specific disease burden, immunisation, mortalities, information on budgetary allocations and public health and related infrastructure. These indicators address the requirement of the “health system performance assessment” which is a conceptual framework at WHO and includes a series of activities aimed at performance evaluation of health systems of member States on socially desirable and efficiency criteria. Questionnaires (different for low and high income countries) that capture directly the situation at household level have been used in many countries to complement information from administrative sources. More recently, WHO has focused on integrating human rights into the goals of health system performance framework and into the assessment itself. This work has been followed-up by the Special Rapporteur on Health who has included in his report to the General Assembly a list of qualitative and quantitative indicators to monitor the progressive realisation of the right to health and child survival, identifying right-to-health norms for each indicator.\(^48\)

31. The **UNDP** has conceptualised and launched the human development approach through its annual *Human Development Reports*. These reports have since 1990 focused on human development advocacy using human development indicators and indices based on national level information. The statistical information in the global reports and more recently in the national reports prepared by many developing countries provides important databases of direct relevance to human rights monitoring, particularly for economic, social and cultural rights. The reports have focused on different thematic issues having a bearing on human development, as well as on monitoring of human rights in general. They have, for instance, focused on issues of good governance, human rights and poverty. The HDR 2000 discussed the relationship between human development and human rights, underlining their different conceptual foundations. It points out that human development indicators primarily aim at assessing the expansion of people’s capabilities, whereas human rights indicators should assess enjoyment of human rights by individuals as well as fulfillment of obligations by States parties. It went on to identify a number of issues and concerns that are important for developing an adequate approach to human rights monitoring.

32. The mission statement of **UNICEF** formally acknowledges that the pursuit of the rights of children and women is a fundamental purpose of the organisation and it is guided by the principles enunciated in the CRC. As a follow-up to the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990) and its Plan of Action, UNICEF has identified and developed in consultation with other UN organisations, statistical indicators on various areas including child survival and health (e.g. child mortality, malaria), child nutrition (e.g. anthropometric measures, breastfeeding, iodine and vitamin A deficiencies), maternal health (e.g. maternal mortality, antenatal care), water and sanitation (e.g. drinking water coverage, access to improved sanitation), education (e.g. primary school attendance), child protection (e.g. birth registration, child labour, female genital mutilation/cutting), HIV/AIDS (e.g. prevalence among adults and children) and immunisation (e.g. maternal and neonatal tetanus, measles, polio). Specific household surveys (*Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys*) have been developed

\(^{47}\) International statistical Classification of Diseases and related health problems (ICD-10) and International classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF).

\(^{48}\) See, for instance, the report on “The right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”, 8 October 2004, A/59/422.
and implemented to collect the data. Data have been made available on the Childinfo software platform. More recently, a new platform – Devinfo - has been developed, incorporating, among other things, Childinfo features and indicators relevant to the implementation and monitoring of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). UNICEF has also been working in collaboration with the University of Bristol and the London School of Economics on identifying quantitative indicators of deprivation and poverty of children, using operational definitions of “severe deprivation” in seven areas, namely adequate nutrition, safe drinking water, decent sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. This work is of direct relevance for the monitoring of human rights, particularly in the context of the CRC.

33. FAO\(^{49}\) has a well developed system of collecting and maintaining information covering different aspects of the food economy namely, production, distribution and consumption. It has organised its information in terms of databases that cover for instance, AQUASTAT (on agricultural water management); and FAOSTAT (covering statistics at country level on agriculture, nutrition, fisheries, forestry, food aid, land use and population). In fact, the FAOSTAT includes specific modules on nutrition related data, on agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food quality. It also has initiatives on related statistics with other agencies. An important recent work of FAO, of relevance to human rights monitoring and design of indicators, relates to the Voluntary Guidelines on the right to adequate food. The guidelines were negotiated and agreed in the Intergovernmental Working Group established by the FAO Council in response to the invitation by the World Food Summit five years later (2001). These guidelines outline a framework to support the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security that could be helpful in outlining an approach to monitor the realisation of other human rights as well. Moreover, FAO’s work on food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping systems (FIVIMS) is also relevant for building monitoring tools, including appropriate human rights indicators, to operationalise the said guidelines for monitoring the realisation of the right to food.

34. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) collects, processes and disseminates statistics on education, literacy, culture, communication, science and technology.\(^{50}\) UIS provides a wide range of statistics to support and monitor the progress towards the achievements of the international commitments on Education for All (EFA).\(^^{51}\) Published in the annual EFA Global Monitoring Report, these statistics contribute to the measurement of disparities at national and international levels on educational attainments by focusing on issues such as enrollment rates, durations of schooling, pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary educations, gender disparities , school life expectancies, literacy, pupil teacher ratios, etc.\(^{52}\) Besides, UIS also provides assistance to member States to help them improving their statistical and analytical capacities. UIS has developed in collaboration with the World Bank a Data Quality Assessment Framework for Education Statistics. The framework assesses data quality taking into account various elements, such as legal and institutional environment, resource availability, integrity, methodological soundness, accuracy and reliability, serviceability, accessibility.

35. ILO has a long standing experience in international labour standard setting and monitoring as well as in compilation and analysis of labour statistics. Its Bureau of Statistics has been collecting data on employment, working conditions and the labour markets including wages, hours of work, child labour, trade union memberships, informal sector, social security,


\(^{50}\) See [http://www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org).

\(^{51}\) The Dakar Framework for Action was adopted at the World Education Forum in April 2000.

\(^{52}\) UIS also collaborates with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on World Education Indicators.
etc. in pursuance of its mandate. More recently it has published (in September 2004) a report on “economic security”, based on a conceptual framework which defines economic security in relation to “basic social needs” (health, education, dwelling, information, social protection, etc.) and “work-related securities” such as employment security, skill reproduction security, reproduction security and income security. Using various statistical and administrative sources, three types of quantitative indicators for each country have been compiled. These include **Input indicators**: capturing national and international adherence to standards and principles; **Process indicators**: mechanism and procedures through which standards and principle can be realised (agencies, expenditure, labour inspectors, collective agreements, etc.); and **Outcome indicators**: achievement, in terms of actual experience of people, differentiated by gender. The three types of indicators have been aggregated into indices and ultimately into one single composite index, termed “economic security index”, for each country. It is worth noting that ILO has combined “objective” and “subjective” indicators: common statistics on the labour market (e.g. employment rates) and statistics derived from *household perception and opinion surveys* (opinion of households on trade unions, on State policy, etc.). The initiative offers interesting insights - conceptual as well as methodological - that could be useful in developing an adequate approach to human rights indicators. In another Working Paper, ILO has suggested a methodology for quantifying the compliance of States parties with a list of core labour rights instruments, using information on ratification, reporting, complaints and observations from ILO monitoring bodies.

36. The World Bank (WB) collects and disseminates a wide range of socio-economic statistics that are predominantly derived from national statistical systems. Using national and other international data sources, the WB produces databases on poverty and inequality and on related public finance and policy issues (the *World Development Indicators*), education statistics (EdStats), gender statistics (GenderStats), statistics on health, nutrition and population (HNPStats) and a database with indicators for the *Millennium Development Goals*. As a key source for collecting data on the dimensions of poverty, the national statistical surveys, including household income/consumption surveys, are supported by the WB with a view to build national statistical capacities. The collected data primarily allows the compilation of outcome indicators. In the context of its work on governance issues, the WB has developed more process oriented indicators based on specific surveys, including experts and households surveys. To assess performance in delivery of services by the State (for instance, in education or health), the WB has implemented specific tools, such as *Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys* (PETS) and *Quantitative Service Delivery Surveys* (QSDS). In situations where administrative data are lacking or of poor quality, these surveys on services providers allow for the collection of data on actual quantity and quality of public services and help in measuring the efficacy of interventions. Given the detailed level of analysis, PETS and QSDS provide information that is usually not available from analysis of

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54 Presentation of J. Figueiredo (ILO); public conference organized by UNRISD (4 November 2004).
57 See [http://www.developmentgoals.org/Data.htm](http://www.developmentgoals.org/Data.htm)
58 It may be worth mentioning that the WB’s “1 or 2 dollars a day poverty lines” indicators are used primarily for assessing and comparing progress on poverty reduction at an international level and are not intended for use in policy discussion at national level (as pointed out by Martin Ravallion, WB, in the UNDP *In Focus* publication of September 2004) for which national poverty lines are used.
budget allocation indicators at government levels.\textsuperscript{60} Potentially such information could be of direct use in monitoring of the relevant human rights obligations of States parties.

37. The \textbf{Inter-Parliamentary Union}, “the international organisation of Parliaments of sovereign States”, established in 1889, aims at establishing representative democracies and promoting dialogue among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries.\textsuperscript{61} It has been using administrative information statistics in its database on the composition and renewal of parliamentary chambers: number of members (in the lower and upper houses), duration of mandate, type of nomination (e.g. direct or indirect election, appointment by president), percentage of women elected, last renewal dates, etc. Information of more qualitative nature on specialised parliamentary bodies, such as human rights commissions, is also collected.\textsuperscript{62}

38. Another example of administrative statistics for use in monitoring of civil and political rights is the data and indicators collected by the \textbf{Council of Europe}, which was founded in 1949 and set up to defend human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law.\textsuperscript{63} Since the late nineties, the Council has published statistics related to the administration of justice. Using a questionnaire filled in by official agencies of member-States, the Council of Europe publishes, for instance, statistics on the prison population.\textsuperscript{64} Quantitative indicators are compiled on the “stock” of the prison population, such as prison population rate per 100,000 inhabitants; age structure; female prisoners; foreign prisoners; legal status of prison population (e.g. untried prisoners, sentenced prisoners); breakdown of sentenced prisoners (final sentence) by offence (homicide, assault, rape, robbery etc.) and by length of sentence. Quantitative indicators on “flows” are also collected and published, such as rates of entries to penal institutions during the year of reference, escape of prisoners, and deaths in penal institutions (including suicide rates).\textsuperscript{65}

39. A major compiler of socio-economic and other administrative data is the \textbf{United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)}. The division is charged with the responsibility of collecting, processing and disseminating statistical information, and the standardisation of statistical methods, classifications and definitions. In addition to technical assistance extended to member-States, UNSD coordinates the main international statistical programmes and activities and provides input and secretarial support to the UN Statistical Commission and its Working Groups. It is a global centre for data in several areas including demography and social statistics compiled from national and international sources. \textit{Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (WISTAT)}, a database dedicated primarily to statistics on gender, population and social development,\textsuperscript{66} and the UN \textit{Disability Database (DISTAT)}\textsuperscript{67} provide statistical information relevant for specific aspects of human rights monitoring.

\textsuperscript{60} The PETS carried out in Uganda in 1996 permitted to explain the contradiction between important increases of budget allocation to education and an apparent stagnation in official primary school enrollments. The survey that was carried out in the education sector revealed that only 13 percent of the annual capitation (per student) grant from the central government reached the schools in 1991-95. 87 percent either disappeared for private gain or was captured by district officials for purposes unrelated to education (see idid, pages 201-202).

\textsuperscript{61} See \url{http://www.ipu.org}

\textsuperscript{62} See \url{http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/world310704.htm}

\textsuperscript{63} The Council of Europe adopted in 1950 the European Convention on Human Rights. See \url{http://www.coe.int}

\textsuperscript{64} See \textit{Annual Penal Statistics of the Council of Europe (SPACE I)}.

\textsuperscript{65} Statistics on “community sanctions and measures” have also been compiled (\textit{SPACE II}).

\textsuperscript{66} See also the publication \textit{The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics} which looks at the status of women using statistical data (\url{http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/ww2000/index.htm}).

\textsuperscript{67} See \url{http://unstats.un.org/unsd/disability/introduction.asp}
40. There is extensive work of UNSD in the area of criminal justice statistics relating to civil and political rights including, the right to life, personal integrity, liberty and security of person and rights in the administration of justice. Under this initiative, standardised concepts and definitions have been defined for official criminal justice statistics. The UNSD handbook presents standard offence classification schemes based on national law as a starting point for a national system of criminal justice system. In this context, it identifies the criminal event including data on the criminal act, the offender and the victim as the most basic category for any criminal justice statistics system. In addition, statistical information is presented on the criminal justice system comprising five major justice components: police, prosecutors, courts, prisons and non-custodial measures. In each of the five components three broad categories of information can be identified which is directly relevant for the monitoring of human rights. This includes caseload data measuring the volume of events in the justice system such as the number of incidents reported by the police; the number of person charged, the number of persons appearing in court, etc; case characteristic data providing more details on the caseload by indicating, for instance, the type of offences committed, the age and sex of offenders and victims, the type of sentences handed, and the ethnicity and education level of inmates; and resource data including information on such items as the number of persons employed, expenditures on wages and salaries, operating costs and revenues.

41. In comparison to other categories of initiatives there is a vast amount of information being collected through administrative efforts of State agencies at the national level and by the inter-governmental agencies at the international level on a variety of socio-economic statistics, as well as statistics related to justice and rule of law issues. While some of this information has been used for monitoring of economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights, it would not be entirely incorrect to conclude that the scope for using this kind of information for monitoring human rights is yet to be fully explored and exploited. The question is then - how does one use this body of information for monitoring the compliance with international human rights instruments? Though this is an issue briefly discussed in the concluding section of this paper, one can identify at least three steps that would facilitate the use of such information in human rights monitoring. First of all it involves identifying and establishing linkages of the data and the indicators collected to the relevant human rights instruments. The second step involves identifying and devising the dimensions and configuration of indicators that best reflect the human rights standards and principles. For instance, should one use literacy rate as an indicator for assessing compliance of States parties with their obligations on the right to education, or would it be appropriate, depending on the country context, to use the enrollment rate for girls as a proportion of the rate for boys. The final step involves seeking a disaggregation of the available information and indicators at levels that capture the attainments and denials of the vulnerable segments of the population. It is true that like other categories of initiatives, the socio-economic and other administrative indicators cannot in themselves provide a complete assessment of the human rights situation in any given context. They necessarily have to be complemented by other methods. Yet because of objective and standardised methodology in data collection, be it through census...


69 It may interesting to note that the Statistical Commission of the United Nations pointed out that in some areas, such as human rights and good governance, “indicators currently proposed were mostly qualitative in nature and could therefore not be technically evaluated by the Advisory Group” (“Friends of the Chair”) which had been appointed to formulate recommendations to elaborate a basic list of indicators for UN Conferences and Summits. The “qualitative indicators” considered for this evaluation were taken from the CCA/UNDAF framework (see document E/2003/83 http://unstats.un.org/unsd/indicatorfoc/documents.asp).
operations or household surveys or through civil registration systems, and with high level of reliability and validity, such indicators constitute a critical element of an approach to bring about greater objectivity, transparency, credibility and thereby acceptability in human rights monitoring.

C. Household perception and opinion surveys

42. Household perception and opinion surveys aim at polling a representative sample of individuals on their personal views on a given issue. The nature of collected information is predominantly qualitative and subjective, therefore not directly quantifiable. In order to enable data aggregation, as well as transformation of perceptions and opinions of individuals into indicators, predetermined or closed formats for the responses along with ordinal or cardinal scales are often used. Depending upon circumstances and theme of the survey, the respondents may be consulted through face-to-face interviews, self-administration of the questionnaire or telephone interviews. Household perception and opinion surveys may involve research institutions, as well as collaboration with national statistical institutes.

43. In the context of use in human rights monitoring, household perception and opinion surveys are potentially relevant to both civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. These surveys constitute a platform and opportunity to capture directly the views of a population on the functioning and policies of governmental bodies and institutions. Consequently, they can contribute to the strengthening of accountability of a State towards its population, in particular when the relevant results of such surveys are disseminated in the media. As in the case of surveys conducted by national statistical agencies, the design of questionnaires, the formulation of questions (and their testing) and the competence of interviewers are of key importance in such surveys for the reliability and validity of the results. For instance, the notion of human rights is often understood differently, people from different horizons or cultures often consider or emphasise certain rights and not others. Therefore, questions formulated in too general or vague terms are of little relevance. Such questions reveal little information concerning underlying problems and can seriously undermine an accurate data interpretation. However, if rigorously designed (including representative sample design) and implemented, these surveys could provide information that can even be used for cross-national comparisons. Initiatives based on household perception and opinion survey to monitor human rights have been using different questionnaire formats.

44. The Gallup International Association is an international network of research institutes which carries out public opinion surveys in about 60 countries. Among the various surveys conducted, the “Gallup International Millennium Survey” in 1999 polled about 57,000 people in 60 countries. The survey covered a wide range of topics, including “governance, democracy, basic values, crime, women’s rights, environment, United Nations, human rights, torture.” As an illustration of the type of questions, respondents were, for instance, invited to answer the following question with predetermined possible responses: “would you say that in [your country] women have equal rights with men or not? (a) yes, women have equal rights (b) no, women do not have equal rights (c) don’t know”. Similarly, the interviewer reads out to the respondent some of the rights mentioned in the Universal

70 For instance, a question could be: “do you agree with the affirmation that there is no independent judiciary in your country?” and the possible answer should be chosen: (1) totally agree, (2) partially agree (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) partially disagree, (5) totally disagree.

Declaration of Human Rights\textsuperscript{72} and asks her to tell if she thinks that this right is being (a) fully respected (b) partially respected (c) not respected or (d) if she/he does not know.\textsuperscript{73} Information collected is then compiled to provide an overall assessment.

45. The \textbf{Afrobarometer}\textsuperscript{74}, coordinated by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa, the Centre for Democratic Development in Ghana and the Michigan State University, is an international measure of public opinion or perception on democracy, governance, livelihoods, participation, conflict and crime. The first round of surveys (1999-2001) was carried out in a dozen African countries (Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) where, about 1200 randomly selected citizen of voting age, in each case, were interviewed for their perception on the functioning of country’s institutions and the work of politicians, corruption, social and economic living conditions etc. A second round of surveys was undertaken in 2002-2003. To facilitate systematic international comparison, questionnaires were standardised. For example, comparisons between countries were based on citizens’ support for and satisfaction with democracy. It varied substantially, from 85% in Botswana to 40% in Lesotho or for the more recent period between 84% of satisfied citizen in Nigeria to only 18% in Zimbabwe. These initiatives though based on public opinion, highlight the possibility of developing statistically representative indicators on issues related to human rights, good governance and democracy using surveys and other statistical techniques. Other similar initiatives at international level are, for instance, the \textbf{Latinobarometer} (covering South-America), \textbf{East Asia Barometer}, and the \textbf{Eurobarometer}. Since the early seventies, the European Commission has been conducting \textbf{Eurobarometer} surveys in all member States of the European Union. Regular standard surveys are carried out to poll people on various issues such as their appreciation of subject of international concern (e.g. globalisation, sustainable development, immigration), on their cultural, political, socio-economic characteristics and habits, and expectations.\textsuperscript{75}

46. Instead of undertaking a sample surveys of all citizen or residents, specific groups of the population can also be surveyed on specific issues. Thus, on “governance” issues, the \textbf{Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS)}, developed jointly by the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, interviews (face-to-face) managers and owners of identified firms. The main purpose of BEEPS is to better understand constraints that hinder the development of business. It is designed to generate comparative assessment of various issues, such as: corruption, lobbying, property rights and business environment.

47. Among recent initiatives, the \textbf{METAGORA} project, which is being implemented by the OECD-Paris21, aims at compiling alternative methodologies and developing data-generating mechanisms, including those based on household surveys, to measure democracy, human rights and governance. The project provides supports to surveys that deal with subjective (perceptions and opinions) as well as objective information (e.g. on living conditions and criminal acts) and that are undertaken at national level by human rights organisations, non- governmental organisations, and national statistical institutes. For instance, questionnaires concerning “ill-treatment and torture” and addressed to individuals have been

\textsuperscript{72} For example, “no one shall be subjected to torture”; “All are equal before the law”; “Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the partners”; “Everyone has the right to freedom of religion”; “Everyone has the right to freedom of speech”; “Everyone has the right to equal pay for equal work” (from Gallup Millennium Survey).

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid.} Shorter annual surveys are conducted by Gallup international. In 2004, a survey (“\textit{Voice of the people}”) was undertaken for World Economic Forum, supplementing its own regular survey (“\textit{Voice of the leaders}”).

\textsuperscript{74} See \url{http://www.afrobarometer.org}

\textsuperscript{75} See \url{http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm}
used in a household survey in Mexico-City. A survey on indigenous people has been carried out in the Philippines by the National Commission on Human rights. Also, a multi-country households’ survey on poverty (e.g. access to basic needs), perception of governance (e.g. corruption incidence) and democracy (e.g. political participation) has been conducted in cities of various African and Latin American countries.

48. While the information and data based on household perception and opinion surveys brings out the individual perspective or the “voice of the people” dimension in the assessment of human rights, which is critical for assessing some of the human rights principles, and is often seen as an important dimension of human rights assessment, the method with its focus on subjectivity could potentially fall short on producing reliable and valid indicators for monitoring human rights on a consistent basis. It could also lack representativeness due to coverage limitations and may not yield measures that allow inter- and intra-temporal comparisons. Nevertheless in many instances, this method could yield information that supplements other kinds of indicators in undertaking human rights assessments.

D. Data based on expert judgements

50. Data based on expert judgements covers initiatives that involve assessments essentially of qualitative nature that can be translated into quantitative form, and are undertaken by a limited number of ‘informed experts’. Unlike household perception and opinion surveys, it involves the use of diverse sources of information, including the media, government reports and reports from non-governmental organisations, by a limited number of experts (advocacy groups, academic researchers, social scientists, managers) who are asked to evaluate and score the performance of States, using cardinal or ordinal scales and sets of relevant criteria or “checklists”. Data based on experts’ judgements have been frequently used for cross-national ranking and comparisons over time, notwithstanding some obvious limitations of the method.76

51. Initiatives in this category have primarily focused on assessment of the civil and political rights. The extent of references to the human rights normative framework varies significantly among these initiatives.77 As in the case of household perception and opinion surveys, there is a significant subjective component in the assessment of human rights under this method, the difference being that it is the subjectivity of the experts which is reflected in this case, as against the views of individuals in case of the household surveys. Some of the well-known initiatives in this category have been criticized for being subjective and based on personal judgements (of a limited number of observers) and not on directly quantifiable empirical data. Moreover, their acceptability is compromised as they are seen as providing summary answers to complex issues without providing systematic basis or examples justifying the assessments. Often they also lack transparency in the process of information selection, collection and evaluation by the experts.

52. Among the initiatives assessing and ranking countries according to their degree of political and civil freedom, the Freedom House78 and its global survey “Freedom in the

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76 This category of initiatives, termed “data based on experts’ judgements”, is sometimes referred to as “standards-based data” in the human rights literature. The terminology chosen for the present report seeks to avoid possible confusion around the notion of “standards” which is also referred to in other categories of initiatives, as in events-based data on human rights violations.


78 For further details see http://www.freedomhouse.org
world” is a well-known and widely used one. Freedom House is a non-governmental organisation established in 1941. The survey has been conducted annually since 1972 and focuses on civil and political rights. In 2003 it covered 191 countries and 18 ‘related’ or ‘disputed’ territories. Using diverse publications and sources of information, the survey is carried out by a group of experts (journalists and academic researchers), using two checklists covering 10 to 15 questions each on the political rights and civil liberties respectively. Each country or territory is awarded a score on a scale from 0 (the most free) to 4 (the least free) on each of the listed questions such as “Are the legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections? Are there free and independent media and other forms of cultural expression? Is there an independent judiciary? Countries or territories are ranked on the basis of the total score and a scale from 1 (the most free) to 7 (the least free) on both sets of questions is used. Based on the average of the two ranks countries and territories are classified into three groups: free (1 to 2.5), partly free (3 to 5.5) and not free (5.5 to 7).

53. UNDP has also experimented with this method. In HDR 1991 it introduced the “human freedom index” based on 40 criteria and data from the World Human Rights developed by Charles Humana in 1985. By assigning a “one” to each freedom protected and a “zero” to each freedom violated, it presented an index that ranked countries. HDR 1992 also presented the “political freedom index”, which focused on five freedoms and drew on the judgments of a range of experts, scoring each country on a scale from 1 to 10. However, in the face of strong criticism and opposition, neither of the two indices was continued.

54. Reporters without Borders compile a press freedom index by asking its partner organisations, a hundred correspondents around the world, as well as journalists, researchers, jurists and human rights activists, to answer around 50 questions. The questionnaire seeks, in particular, information on direct attacks on journalists (such as murders, imprisonment, physical assaults and threats), on the media (censorship, confiscation, searches and pressure) and about the degree of impunity enjoyed by those responsible for such violations. Final indices sum up the state of press freedom in more than 160 countries.

55. The Minorities at Risk is a research project based at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management that follows the status and conflicts of politically active groups, using various sources of information such as the media, government reports, non-governmental reports and expert opinion. The project is designed to provide information in a standardized format that aids comparative research. At present, more than 280 groups are included in the database. The focus is on groups that have “political significance” which is determined by the following two criteria: (a) the group collectively suffers, or benefits from, systematic discriminatory treatment vis-à-vis other groups in a society; (b) the group is the basis for political mobilisation and collective action in defence or promotion of its self-defined interests. In addition, to standardised qualitative information

79 HDR 1991, page 20, Box 1.2.
80 The numbering system adopted a broad range (0 to 10), assuming that variations in performance can consequently be quantified with greater precision (HDR 1992, page 30).
81 See http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=11715
82 See http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/
83 Political significance is defined by “Minorities at Risk” with the following two criteria: (1) the group collectively suffers, or benefits from, systematic discriminatory treatment vis-à-vis other groups in a society; (2) the group is the basis for political mobilisation and collective action in defence or promotion of its self-defined interests.
84 Additional criteria are taken into account, including a minimum criteria for the size of the country (at least 500.000 people) and of the group (at least 100.000 people) or a minimum percentage of the population of the
(e.g. assessments of “risks of rebellion or protest”, chronologies of events related to each group), the Minorities at Risk project compiles indices (using cardinal scales) for each group on the intensity of cultural, political and economic discriminations and disadvantages.  

56. Regarding initiatives in the field of governance, the Business Environment Risk Intelligence (BERI) is a private source of analysis of the business environment and compiles various quantitative indices (e.g. “political risk index”; “operation risk index”) based on qualitative evaluations undertaken by diplomats and political scientists. Global Insight is a private company providing similar kind of data on country risk assessments to international investors. The World Economic Forum (WEF) produces the “Global Competitiveness Survey” in collaboration with the Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID). It ranks countries using indices based on data obtained from surveys of business executives and from official socio-economic data. Other similar initiatives focusing on economic and governance issues are, for instance, the “Heritage Foundation/Wall Street Journal” and their “index of economic freedom”, Price Waterhouse Coopers’ “Opacity index”, and the Institute for Management Development and its index in its “World Competitiveness Yearbook”. Transparency International compiles a “corruption perceptions index”, which is a composite index of various polls and surveys collecting data on corruption, including some of the surveys previously listed. The number of respondents can vary considerably among these initiatives. In instances when there are a large number of respondents, the results of the survey based on expert judgments may come close to that of a household perception and opinion survey, which could often raise the futility of segregating the two categories of initiative.

57. A major advantage of using information based on expert judgments is that they can be conducted quickly and can be effective in presenting a first assessment of the situation. Often, such assessments do capture the overall situation quite well. Yet they generally fall short on reliability and comparability criteria, which in turn affect their public acceptability. As a method of human rights assessment, particularly with regard to monitoring consistently over time, the compliance of State parties to international human rights instruments, such a method may serve only a limited purpose.

III. Initiatives on human rights indicators by OHCHR

58. In January 1993, a seminar on “appropriate indicators to measure achievements in the progressive realisation of economic, social and cultural rights” was convened at the recommendation of the former Special Rapporteur on the realisation of economic, social and

country in which it resides (more than 1%). Six types of groups are distinguished, including “indigenous” and “national minority”.  


86 See http://www.beri.com

87 See http://www.globalinsight.com/

88 http://www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/Global+Competitiveness+Programme%5CGlobal+Competitiveness+Report

89 http://www.heritage.org/research/features/index/

90 http://www.opacity-index.com/pro_survey_overview.html

91 http://www02.imd.ch/wcy/

92 http://www.transparency.org
cultural rights, Danilo Türk. The seminar considered the issue of identifying ideal quantitative indicators for substantive economic, social and cultural rights of the Covenant. However, discussions concentrated largely on conceptual issues. The conclusions and recommendations of the seminar identified two main areas for further work. The first was related to conceptual issues and the need to clarify the content of specific rights and the nature of obligations of States parties. The Special Rapporteur recommended that any attempt at using indicators as a means of measuring or assessing human rights should be based on and be consistent with the rights contained, \textit{inter alia}, in the ICESCR, ICCPR and UDHR. In this regard, the seminar concluded that the first priority was to identify and clarify the content of the various rights and obligations. “Only then would it be possible to identify the most appropriate way to assess progressive achievement, which may or may not involve the use of statistical indicators.” The second area for further work related to the need for new approaches to data collection, analysis and interpretation that focused on the status of the disadvantaged and the marginalized population groups and the need to build and strengthen State capacity in these areas.

59. In September 1999, a workshop on “civil and political rights indicators” was organized by OHCHR, considering the relative lack of indicators for civil and political rights in comparison to economic, social and cultural rights. This need was expressed following the controversy created by certain indicators on civil and political rights, such as the Human Freedom Index and the Political Freedom Index of the UNDP Human Development Reports. The workshop worked simultaneously on the identification of indicators in three areas, namely administration of justice; democracy and participation; and security of person. The considered indicators were of both quantitative (e.g. “number of reported cases of corporal punishment”) and qualitative nature (e.g. “provision made for regular or unannounced visits of places of detention”). While presenting a first list of these indicators it was pointed out that there was a need to further elaborate and standardize them.

60. In September 2000, OHCHR participated to the Montreux Conference on “Statistics, Development and Human Rights” organized under the aegis of the International Association for Official Statistics. The conference gathered more than 700 participants from various international organisations and non-governmental organisations. Among the numerous conceptual, political and practical issues discussed, the need to strengthen “the integration of the human rights dimension as a fundamental reference in the conception and implementation of information policies of national statistical institutes” was underlined. The conference stressed the need to integrate the “right element” into existing socio-economic indicators, to measure not just status, but also redress and accountability. Secondly, it identified the need to supplement the available indicators with new measures for assessing civil and political human

\textsuperscript{93} The seminar was held in pursuance of resolution 1991/18 of the CHR and decision 1991/235 of the Economic and Social Council.

\textsuperscript{94} Right to work (art. 6); right to just and favourable conditions of work (art. 7); right to join and form the trade union of one’ choice (art. 8); right to social security (art. 9); protection of the family, mothers and children (art. 10); right to adequate food (art. 11); right to adequate housing (art. 11); right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (art. 12); the right to education (arts. 13 and 14); the right to take part in cultural life and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and to benefit from the protection of the interests of authors (art. 15); the concept of participation (art. 13(1) and 15(1)).

\textsuperscript{95} A/Conf. 157/PC/73, para. 153.

\textsuperscript{96} See OHCHR final report of the Workshop on civil and political rights indicators, Geneva, 27-29 September 1999.

\textsuperscript{97} For the two indices, see HDR 1991 and HDR 1992, respectively.

It also emphasized the need to disaggregate data to expose and redress inequities and discrimination in development – including by race, religion, gender, language and other crucial categories.

61. In 2002, OHCHR developed, with the support of Professors Paul Hunt, Manfred Nowak and Siddiq Osmani, a set of Draft guidelines on a human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies, which provides a list of quantitative and qualitative “key targets and indicators” for civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights identified as being relevant to addressing poverty reduction. The approach adopted in this document on identifying the targets and indicators for operationalising a human rights framework for poverty reduction is a useful starting point for monitoring the realisation of human rights. Moreover, it also highlights the possibility of using the available administrative data in undertaking human rights assessments. There is, however, considerable scope to build on the list of indicators that has been identified in the document, particularly from the point of addressing a larger concern of monitoring the compliance to the human rights treaties.

62. More recently, an “Expert Group Meeting on Housing Rights Monitoring” organized by the United Nations Housing Rights Programme, a joint programme of UN-HABITAT and OHCHR, prepared a set of internationally applicable housing rights indicators. The meeting underlined the necessity for indicators to reflect human rights standards on the right to adequate housing. A set of “housing indicators” was examined and suggestions for new – primarily quantitative - indicators were formulated.99

IV. Conclusions

Identifying needs and addressing Gaps

63. In building a meaningful, comprehensive and an acceptable approach to developing human rights indicators for assessing the compliance of State parties with international human rights instruments, there is a need to satisfactorily address some of the conclusions from the foregone analysis. There are at least three that are important. To begin with, the initiatives examined do not necessarily provide an adequate framework to develop such human rights indicators that could be sensitively and effectively used in guiding and monitoring public policy in the protection and promotion of human rights. More specifically, there is a near absence of a conceptual framework in these initiatives that could be readily considered as a starting point for undertaking a meaningful work on human rights indicators. Some of these initiatives, particularly when they are in the area of human rights indicators, are often in response to the need to address a limited aspect of compliance to or violation of a sub-set of human rights instruments. A similar conclusion has been drawn in a recent study by Landman and Hausermann on map-making and survey of main international initiatives.100 This is also true about the initiatives within the UN system on human rights indicators that have emerged on account of attempts by the concerned agencies to mainstream human rights in areas of their mandated activities.

64. The second conclusion relates to the effectiveness of different data generating mechanisms and the methods employed to translate the available information into indicators

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100 See for details, Landman Todd and Julia Hausermann, “Map-Making and Analysis of the Main International Initiatives on Developing Indicators on Democracy and Good Governance”; study commissioned by Eurostat, 2003.
that are suitable for monitoring the implementation of human rights treaties by the States parties. Clearly, an institutionalised approach based on objective methods of data collection and presentation for both quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments would be necessary to assist in the process of monitoring human rights treaties. Such an approach would improve transparency in the monitoring process and encourage the acceptability of quantitative indicators in human rights assessments. We have noted in our survey the potential role that the available socio-economic and other administrative statistics can play in this regard. Indeed, except for a few initiatives, in most cases, the possibility of using the available information on the socio-economic indicators, as well as information pertaining to some civil and political rights, collected by administrative agencies at the international, national and sub-national level for use as human rights indicators has not been adequately explored. This does not in any way undermine the use of event-based information and data generated through perception and opinion surveys using essentially subjective methodologies, in building human rights indicators for both civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. A possible starting point would be to explore and exhaust the available institutionalised databases before identifying specific areas where suitable human rights indicators may have to be designed and introduced based on appropriate data generating mechanisms. Methodologically, the objective should be to bring about greater objectivity in the design and identification of indicators and move towards quantitative indicators, where possible, even for measuring qualitative issues of relevance to human right assessment.

65. Finally, for human rights indicators to be meaningful, acceptable and effective in meeting the objectives for which they are deployed, it is essential that they are contextually relevant. While it may be possible to have some core human rights indicators that are universal in their relevance and use, there would invariably be a need for a set of indicators that are customised to reflect the unique situation of every country. It becomes essential in this context that the conceptual and the methodological approach adopted to identify and build human rights indicators allows for the flexibility to contextualise indicators.

66. If this line of reasoning has to be pursued further, once there is a reasonable consensus on an adequate conceptual approach to develop indicators for monitoring the compliance of States parties to human rights treaties, a large part of the work related to provision and use of data and indicators on human rights would fall within the domain of the national institutions. On the one hand national statistical agencies responsible for various kinds of administrative data will have to provide information on relevant indicators and, on the other hand, other national institutions including the National Human Rights Institutions and civil society organisations will have to bring about a human rights perspective in the use and interpretation of this information. In terms of the process, it would entail, at some point of time, the involvement of the UN Statistical Commission, the UN Statistical Division, other international organisations and national statistical agencies, in evolving a coordinated approach for developing a database on human rights indicators.

Towards a conceptual and methodological approach to human rights indicators

A possible conceptual approach

67. For indicators to be effective tools in monitoring the implementation of human rights, it is necessary that they are appropriately anchored in a conceptual framework that addresses the concerns and goals of that process. The need for an adequate conceptual basis lies in having a rationale for identifying and designing indicators, as well as composite measures,
and not reducing the exercise to a mere listing of possible alternatives. More specifically, it reveals and enables a linkage between the means and policy instruments, on one hand, and the desired outcomes, on the other. In the context of the work on human rights indicators, it is important, therefore, to outline a conceptual framework or a set of principles that could help in identifying and designing suitable indicators. A well thought through approach is also needed to translate the normative content of the human rights framework into operational elements that could directly contribute to identification and selection of suitable indicators for human rights monitoring. In doing so, it is necessary to keep in mind that the characteristic of human rights indicators that address the requirements for monitoring human rights instruments is, perhaps, distinct from human rights indicators that are required to monitor the process, say at project level, to facilitate the design and implementation of project activities in accordance with human rights norms and principles.\textsuperscript{101}

68. In outlining a conceptual framework for anchoring the human rights indicators one has to necessarily consider the following key human rights principles\textsuperscript{102}:

- Explicit linkages with international human rights instruments;
- Universality and inalienability of human rights;
- Recognition of the indivisible, interdependent, inter-related and co-realisable nature of human rights;
- Emphasis on participation, an inclusionary and an empowering process of development;
- Non-discrimination and a process promoting equality;
- Accountability and the rule of law;
- Recognition that while some human rights can be realised only progressively others that could be directly guaranteed need to be protected from denial, non-retrgression, and violations and
- Recourse to redress; legal as well as administrative.

There are some implications that follow from adopting these principles. First of all, in view of the indivisibility and interdependence of the human rights, there should be an attempt to have a common approach to identifying indicators for both civil and political rights, as well as the economic, social and cultural rights. For instance, this could be done by looking at indicators in terms of the need to capture the compliance of State parties on their obligation to respect, protect and fulfill all human rights. Such an approach would overcome the conventional way of focusing on protection (violation) of civil and political rights and promotion (progressive realisation) of economic, social and cultural rights. There is an acceptance that all human rights have an element of promotion, as well as protection, though the respective norms and standards in all cases may not have been fully codified yet. This is true of many economic social and cultural rights where the elaboration of the ‘minimum core content of the rights’ falls short of having benchmarks for defining violation or denial of those rights.\textsuperscript{103} Secondly, among the human rights, there are some that are ‘substantive rights’ such as the right to life or right to education that have a relatively clear content and may also have a ‘level

\textsuperscript{101} The latter set of indicators could be considered as project performance indicators, but such indicators would need to focus on the monitoring of the project cycle for its conformity to human rights principles.

\textsuperscript{102} These include the principles agreed at the Stamford inter-agency meeting on the rights-based approach. See for details “Report of The Second Interagency Workshop on Implementing a Human Rights-based Approach in the Context of UN Reform”

progressive” component in realising them. There are others that are “procedural rights” like the right not to be discriminated or the right to a fair trial that may have to be defined in the context of a substantive right. This distinction will have a bearing on the approach one uses for identification and design of indicators.

69. In addition, there are two other aspects of human rights emanating from these principles that would have to be explicitly brought into the approach on the development of indicators. The first relates to the importance accorded to the nature and the quality of the process for implementing the realisation of the human rights. Some human rights, mainly the economic, social and cultural rights, can be realised only progressively because of the resource constraints. Others that can be enjoyed immediately, once they have been ratified and guaranteed by the concerned State, have to be protected ad infinitum. In both cases, it is important that the process of fulfillment and protection to be in conformity with the human rights norms and principles. It is important, therefore, to not only focus on the realisation of outcomes consistent with human rights, but also on the process of realising such outcomes. The other aspect relates to the importance of the notion of ‘accessibility’ as against mere ‘availability’ in the human rights framework. For instance, in the human rights context it is not sufficient to ensure the availability of such commodities and services that correspond to the realisation of human rights, but it is equally important to ensure the accessibility to these commodities and services for all individuals in keeping with the human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality.

70. It is proposed that we look at two kinds of indicators. The first of these are general in the sense that they do not relate exclusively to the realisation of any specific human right, but are meant to capture the quality of process in terms of its adherence to the key human rights principles. The indicators in this category would capture the extent to which the process to implement and realise human rights is participatory, inclusionary, empowering, non-discriminatory and accountable. Moreover, depending on the level of disaggregation of the indicators such as national, regional or local project level, different indicators may have to be considered to capture these attributes. It is also possible that in reflecting these principles in the choice of human rights indicators, one uses a similar approach as indicated for the “procedural rights”, i.e. capturing the human rights principles in the context of indicators on specific substantive human rights. Thus, for instance, compliance with the principal of non-discrimination in the context of the right to education could be captured using an indicator like the proportion of the girls in school going age-group enrolled in school to the proportion of the boys in the same age-group enrolled in the school.

71. The second set of indicators is more specific and relates to the realisation of substantive human rights. These indicators would reflect outcomes - both positive, for instance, the literacy attainment of a population group, and negative, as in the number of extra-judicial killings - and the relevant underlying processes relevant for the realisation of the concerned human right. In each case, based on the legal instrument and its elaboration through relevant general comments, the attributes of the human right would be identified as a starting point. Thus, for instance, in the case of the right to adequate housing the relevant

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105 It could be argued that the notion of accessibility itself has many dimensions like physical and economic access. At the same time, there are other aspects of human rights, namely the issue of adaptability and quality that may have to be considered in outlining an approach to human rights indicators.
106 Such indicators, perhaps, may be more useful in addressing the needs of development practitioners for human rights indicators at project level.
attributes that were identified were habitability, accessibility to services, and affordability of housing and security of tenure. In the second stage a configuration of structural, process and outcome indicators would be identified for the selected attributes of the human right. A key concern in proposing such a configuration of indicators is the need to explicitly factor the notion of accountability in the design of human rights indicators by establishing an unambiguous linkage, to the extent possible, between duties of the States parties (policy instruments) and the desired targets/goals or the milestones in the realisation of the human rights. Another concern is to highlight the importance of the nature and conduct of the process in the realisation of human rights. The suggested configuration, as we shall shortly see, is also useful in capturing the essence of the principle of progressive realisation.

72. We define structural indicators as those indicators that reflect the ratification / adoption of legal instruments and existence of basic institutional mechanisms deemed necessary for facilitating realisation of the concerned human right. For example the structural indicators in the context of the right to food would include information on the legal status of the right, legal status of related rights (rights of women to agricultural land), and the existence of the institutional mechanism including the regulatory framework and agencies mandated to address the issue of food availability and accessibility. Similarly, in case of the right to legal remedies, the structural indicators could include information on ratification of relevant international instruments, establishment of requisite judicial institutions and a supportive framework of local laws, rules and regulations seen as necessary to implement the right.

73. The process indicators relate the State policy instruments with development milestones which cumulate into outcomes that could be more directly related to realisation of human rights. Such indicators could not only capture the notion of accountability but, at the same time, help directly monitoring the progressive fulfillment of the right or the process of protecting the right, as the case may be for the realisation of the concerned right. Unlike the outcome indicators the process indicators are more sensitive to changes; hence instead of a time series of outcome indicators, they are better at capturing progressive realisation of the right. In case of the right to food, process indicators could include the various state policy instruments such as indicators on land tenure system, land reforms, public investment in irrigation, agriculture extension, subsidy on agricultural inputs, indicators on trade regime; population covered by the public distribution system, food subsidy; and indicators on capacity of the State to undertake relief work.

74. The outcome indicators capture attainments, individual and collective, that reflect the status of realisation of the human rights in a given context. Some outcome indicators in case of the right to food could be the share of monthly household expenditure on food, average calorie intake of the people vis-à-vis applicable norms or anthropometric measures for women and children. There are at least two important features of an outcome indicator. First of all, as mentioned above, these indicators could be more directly related to the realisation of the corresponding right and secondly, there may be a number of processes contributing to the attainment of a single outcome. In such a case, it becomes useful to make a distinction between the process and outcome indicators. Thus, for instance, if life expectancy at birth is used as an outcome indicator for the realisation of right to health, it may be useful to look at process indicators on infant mortality, public hygiene, nutrition and education as milestones that need to be progressively attained for the fulfillment and the realisation of this human right.

75. In the final analysis, it may not matter if an indicator is identified in one or the other suggested category. However, working with such an approach simplifies the selection of indicators; encourages the use of contextually relevant information; facilitates a more comprehensive coverage of the different attributes or aspects of the realisation of the right; and, perhaps, also minimises on the overall number of indicators required to monitor the realisation of the concerned right in any context. Sometimes a single indicator may be seen as being adequate to cover more than one provision of the relevant human rights instrument, in other cases a few indicators may be required to cover just one provision of the instrument. Moreover, in using different kinds of indicators, such as the structural, process and outcome, there is an attempt at capturing both the “flow” and the “stock” aspects of the process of social change and development that underpins the protection and the promotion of the human rights. A ‘flow’ indicator allows monitoring of momentary changes (from year to year e.g. per capita availability of food grains) while a ‘stock’ indicator reflects summary outcomes that consolidate such changes over successive years (e.g. anthropometric measures for school going children). An appropriate mix of such indicators could potentially overcome some of the constraints associated with availability of suitable information and data-lags in monitoring human rights.

Some methodological considerations

76. The foremost consideration in adopting a methodology for identifying and building human rights indicators, or for that matter any set of indicators is its relevance and effectiveness in addressing the objective(s) for which the indicators are to be used. Most other methodological requirements, including validity and statistical reliability of indicators follow from this consideration. In the context of the work on human rights indicators it would be desirable to, inter alia, consider the following:

- Develop indicators to capture the obligation of the State to respect, protect (violation and denial of rights) and fulfill (provision and facilitation);
- Indicators that are suitable for temporal and spatial comparison;
- Quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments based on objective data generating methods;
- Amenable to disaggregation and decomposition in terms of regions, gender and specific population segments;

77. It is equally important that the indicators are suitable to the context where they are applied. The contextual relevance of indicators is a key consideration in their acceptability among stakeholders associated with monitoring the implementation of human rights. Countries and regions within countries differ in terms of their social, economic and political attainments. They differ in the level of realisation of human rights. These differences are invariably reflected in terms of differences in development priorities. Therefore, it may not be possible to always have a universal set of indicators to assess attainment and progress in the realisation of human rights. Having said that, it is also true that certain human rights indicators, for example those capturing attainments or violations in some civil and political rights may well be relevant across all countries and their regions, whereas others that capture realisation of economic or social rights, such as the right to education or housing, may have to be customised, depending on the level of their realisation, to be of relevance in different countries. But even in the latter case, it would be relevant to universally monitor the minimum core content of the rights. Thus, in designing a set of human rights indicators, like any other set of indicators, there is a need to strike a balance between universally relevant indicators and culturally (contextually) specific indicators. Both kinds of indicators are relevant, one for
facilitating international comparisons, the other for reflecting the local concerns and encouraging 'ownership' by the countries and their agencies. It would be desirable, therefore, that any approach to build human rights indicators while putting together a core set of universally relevant indicators outlines certain guiding principles that help in contextualising the indicators at the national or sub-national level.
**Annex 1: Illustrative list of human rights**

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<td>Rights of and within family</td>
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<td>Right to life</td>
<td>Right to a name, right to a nationality</td>
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<td>Right to personal integrity</td>
<td>Right to freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence</td>
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<td>Right to liberty and security of person</td>
<td>Right to adequate living conditions</td>
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<td>Rights in the administration of justice, right to effective remedy</td>
<td>Right to food</td>
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<td>Right to property</td>
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<td>Right to freedom from slavery, forced or compulsory labour</td>
<td>Right to housing</td>
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<td>Right to freedom of movement and residence</td>
<td>Right to and in work, right to trade unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right to take part in public affairs, right to vote, right to be elected</td>
<td>Right to social security</td>
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<td>Right to freedom of opinion and expression</td>
<td>Right to education</td>
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<td>Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion</td>
<td>Right to take part in cultural life</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rights to the benefits of science and intellectual property</td>
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</tbody>
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1. HURIDOCS INDEX TERMS
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3. RIGHTS TYPOLOGY
4. TYPES OF ACTS
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20. TYPES OF INTERVENTION
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31. LEGAL COUNSEL
32. TYPES OF COURTS
33. TYPES OF LANGUAGE USED IN COURT
34. AUTOPSY RESULTS
35. DEATH CERTIFICATE
36. STATEMENTS SIGNED
37. MEDICAL ATTENTION
38. INTENT
39. SEX
40. TYPES OF ADDRESSES
41. VIOLATIONS STATUS
42. RELIABILITY
43. MONITORING STATUS
44. IMPACT ON THE SITUATION
45. INTERVENTION STATUS
46. PRIORITY
47. COMPENSATION
48. TYPES OF DATES
Annex 3: Fundamental principles of official statistics

The Statistical Commission,

Bearing in mind that official statistical information is an essential basis for development in the economic, demographic, social and environmental fields and for mutual knowledge and trade among the States and peoples of the world,

Bearing in mind that the essential trust of the public in official statistical information depends to a large extent on respect for the fundamental values and principles which are the basis of any society which seeks to understand itself and to respect the rights of its members,

Bearing in mind that the quality of official statistics, and thus the quality of the information available to the Government, the economy and the public depends largely on the cooperation of citizens, enterprises, and other respondents in providing appropriate and reliable data needed for necessary statistical compilations and on the cooperation between users and producers of statistics in order to meet users' needs,

Recalling the efforts of governmental and non-governmental organisations active in statistics to establish standards and concepts to allow comparisons among countries,

Recalling also the International Statistical Institute Declaration of Professional Ethics,

Having expressed the opinion that resolution C (47), adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe on 15 April 1992, is of universal significance,

Noting that, at its eighth session, held at Bangkok in November 1993, the Working Group of Statistical Experts, assigned by the Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to examine the Fundamental Principles, had agreed in principle to the ECE version and had emphasized that those principles were applicable to all nations,

Noting also that, at its eighth session, held at Addis Ababa in March 1994, the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, considered that the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics are of universal significance,

Adopts the present principles of official statistics:

1. Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information.

2. To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.

3. To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

4. The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

5. Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

6. Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

7. The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.

8. Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

9. The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

10. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.
### Annex 4: some international organisations / databases and related rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International organisations and programmes and related statistical databases</th>
<th>Main vulnerable groups addressed or human rights directly or indirectly affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women Watch</strong>, United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE)</td>
<td>Women (CEDAW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Programme on Ageing (DESA), including statistical database</td>
<td>Older persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR Population Data Statistical Yearbook Camp Indicator report</td>
<td>Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) <em>Parline</em> database [108] Women in National Parliaments</td>
<td>Right to take part in public affairs, to vote and right to be elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Population Division/DESA United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)</td>
<td>Right to a name, a nationality and to be registered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Labour Organisation (ILO) Bureau of statistics databases [109] LABORSTAT internet ILO Statistical Databases</td>
<td>Right to and in work, right to trade unions Right to social security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) UNESCO Institute for Statistics Tables with statistics</td>
<td>Right to education; right to take part in cultural life; rights to the benefits of science and intellectual property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Health Organisation (WHOSIS)</td>
<td>Right to health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAOSTAT) | Right to food
Overview of FAO databases | FAOSTAT
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) | Right to housing

**Additional international organisations / databases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Databases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)/DESA | United Nations Common Database  
DISTAT, the United Nations Disability Statistics Database  
Indicators for the Millennium Development Goals (UNSD)  
Social indicators  
Statistics and indicators on women and men |
| World Bank (WB) | World Development Indicators  
Living Standards Measurement Survey  
Education Statistics (EdStats)  
Gender Statistics (GenderStats) |
| United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) | Statistics in Human Development Report |
| Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) | Overview of databases  
Social Protection Statistics and other related social statistics  
Demographic indicators and migration statistics  
Education and training  
Aid activities and external debt  
Agricultural Policy Indicators  
Health |
<p>| Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) | Home page |
| United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) | Overview of databases |
| United Nations Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) | Statistical information |
| United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) | Statistical information |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)</th>
<th>Home page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)</td>
<td>Home page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>