

Report on the 50th Session of the Human Rights Council, 13-8 July 2022**Donatella Benjamin**
SI UN Representative Geneva

The Human Rights 50th session (HRC50) was held in Geneva from 13 June to 8 July, 2022. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, opened HRC50 by presenting her [annual report on the global state of human rights](#), followed by an interactive dialogue.

Ms. Bachelet highlighted four areas of intervention as focus points:

- inequality and discrimination: the High Commissioner expressed alarm at deepening inequalities and staggering levels of extreme poverty, exacerbated by the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, which could be as great today as in the early 20th century;
- human rights should be integrated into national budgets, as powerful levers for SDG progress: when sufficient resources are allocated to cover at least minimum essential levels of economic and social rights, better development results are obtained. States that adopted innovative measures for social protection during the COVID-19 pandemic saw mitigated socioeconomic consequences;
- need for greater international cooperation and solidarity, including for debt relief: the financing gap to achieve the SDGs has widened by over 70 per cent to an annual amount of \$4.3 trillion. In the face of looming debt crises, concerted and coordinated action by all stakeholders is urgently needed.
- building resilience in times of crisis: it is crucially important to safeguard civic space, because progress cannot be separated from economic goals, such as reducing poverty, from the rights of those who are the intended beneficiaries of those developments. Ms. Bachelet noted with pride her efforts to develop UN system guidance on civic space and to support human rights defender networks around the globe.

On 27 June, the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women focused on two panels:

- *Exploring the nexus between climate change and violence against women and girls through a human rights lens,*
- *Human rights-based and gender-responsive care and support systems.*

During the 50th session, three draft Council resolutions concerning mandates relative to VAW and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity were discussed:

- Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women (extension of three years and special focus on how violence impacts girls) - [The draft resolution on violence against women](#) was adopted by consensus (after a Russian amendment was [rejected](#) with just nine votes in favor).
- Regarding the renewal of Mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) States tabled 13 'hostile' amendments at the Council plenary. The voting on each amendment was extremely close. [The final draft resolution](#), with one single amendment, presented by Uruguay, was [adopted](#) with 23 in favor, 17 against (including China) and 7 abstentions (including Poland).

- [The draft resolution on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls](#), presented by Mexico, faced a large number of hostile amendments (by Nigeria, Egypt, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia) aiming to remove terms such as 'gender' (and instead proposed 'sex'), 'bodily integrity,' 'safe abortion,' 'sex education', 'comprehensive sex education,' and 'reproductive rights.' All amendments were largely rejected, and the final resolution was adopted by consensus.

During his session, the Council also adopted the UPR reports of Haiti, Iceland, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, South Sudan, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. A total of 2,962 recommendations were made to these 12 States, out of which 2,392 were accepted, 3 partially accepted, and 567 were noted.

Recommended Reading:

[Annual Report On The Global State Of Human Rights](#)