

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### Human Rights & Participation at GFF:

At the Global Futures Forum, human rights and participation are cross-cutting issues that will be highlighted across all thematic tracks. Adopting intersectional approaches that recognize the importance of human rights across all policy domains is essential if human rights are to be protected for all.

### Human Rights & Participation at the UN:

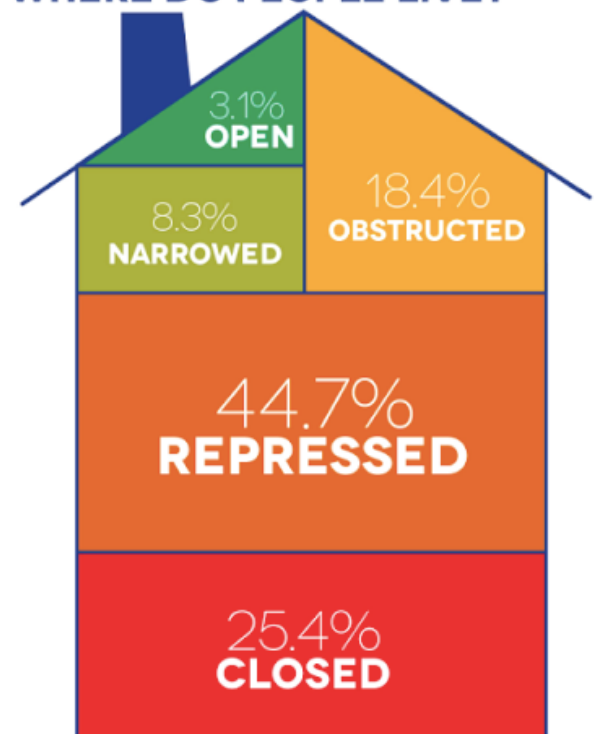
The Our Common Agenda (OCA) report emphasises that all rights are mutually reinforcing, indivisible and universal - they cannot be enjoyed without each other and apply to all. To enhance protection of these rights, Member States must be considered responsible for their implementation. Therefore Member States need to live up to the many commitments they have signed, including the UN Charter, International Bill of Human Rights, and the multitude of Human Rights Conventions and protocols. Institutional reforms are also required for existing UN human rights mechanisms, particularly the Human Rights Council's enforcement activities - Universal Periodic Review, Treaty Bodies, and Special Rapporteurs

### Current threats to Human Rights & Participation:

The elimination of all forms of discrimination requires the effective remedy and enforcement of rights for all ages, genders, abilities, and requires the inclusion of caste as a protected group. Not only is gender equality itself a human right, but in many cases, gender discrimination involves the denial of other human rights. Gender-based discrimination manifests in a number of ways; sometimes legal discrimination (e.g. 178 countries maintain legal barriers that prevent women's full economic participation) and other times within social interactions (1 in 3 women experience gender-based violence in their lifetime).

Only 3.1% of people live in countries with open civic space, while 9 out of 10 people live in countries where civic freedoms are severely restricted by authoritarian regimes. Promoting and protecting human rights by enhancing civic space makes all countries stronger and more resilient, building on the right to participate and a range of freedoms. With a rapidly changing globe comes new challenges and opportunities - these include sustainability, the internet, and technology. One way to entrench positive action is to intersperse consideration of human rights with these issues. For example, considering internet access a human right given the ever-increasing amount of our lives taking place online.

### WHERE DO PEOPLE LIVE?



BASED ON WORLD BANK POPULATION DATA 2020

### Social Contract :

The notion of a **social contract** stems from moral and political philosophy. Put simply, it is the idea that living in a society means implicitly agreeing to a social contract by which you gain benefits from the state in exchange for sacrificing some freedoms. To improve the UN human rights system and the enforcement of global norms and standards, a new social contract has been proposed between the citizens and their governments, business, and other private and public stakeholders, as well the UN and other international organisations.



IMPART

<sup>1</sup>World Bank, "Nearly 2.4 Billion Women Globally Don't Have Same Economic Rights as Men", March 1, 2022, Accessed March 8, 2023, URL - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/03/01/nearly-2-4-billion-women-globally-don-t-have-same-economic-rights-as-men>

<sup>2</sup>UN Foundation, "Gender Equality in 2022: the best, the worst, the most surprising, and most ridiculous", 2022, Accessed March, 14 2023 URL - [https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/gender-equality-in-2022-the-best-the-worst-the-most-surprising-and-most-ridiculous/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAgaGgBhC8ARIsAAyLfh7Tl\\_I7bZ78\\_smoSvm03QlIYicWSFsmLPt-S5g3Ja16e7pTbp2nQaApgsEALw\\_wcB](https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/gender-equality-in-2022-the-best-the-worst-the-most-surprising-and-most-ridiculous/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAgaGgBhC8ARIsAAyLfh7Tl_I7bZ78_smoSvm03QlIYicWSFsmLPt-S5g3Ja16e7pTbp2nQaApgsEALw_wcB)

<sup>3</sup>CIVICUS Monitor, 2021, Accessed March 14, 2023, URL- <https://findings2021.monitor.civicus.org/in-numbers.html>

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### Key Recommendations From Co-Facilitators:

- **Launch a full spectrum human rights implementation and enforcement pact** - The pact would call on civil society, human rights defenders, whistleblowers, governments and non-governmental actors to implement and enforce human rights.
- **Protecting Human Rights Defenders** - The protection of human rights defenders (HRDs), as well as environmental and socio-economic defenders, is crucial, especially for young women and girls, and systemically marginalized individuals.
- **Strengthen Civil Society and Youth Co-Leadership based on the Young Feminist Manifesto** - Applying the manifesto across all efforts and decision-making to promote and protect human rights, and strengthen participation, civil society and youth. Youth must not be seen only as beneficiaries but as rights-holders and victims/survivors of human rights violations, and must be centered as co-leaders and valued partners.

### Key Human Rights Proposals Include:

- **Double the resources of the OHCHR, improve the effectiveness of the treaty body system, increase the number of UN staff with human rights knowledge, education, and experience, support closer cooperation between OHCHR and other UN actors in the Pact for the Future** - OHCHR still receives less than 5% of the regular UN budget, and it is approximately one-twentieth the size of UNDP.
- **The procedures of UN human rights mechanisms, including the UPR and treaty bodies, need to adopt an intergenerational strategy that brings children, adolescents and youth voices to the sessions and adapt participation practices, including through easy-read and child-friendly information** - The UPR needs to develop a mechanism that increases visibility of specifics/similar recommendations that a country does not follow as proposed in previous rounds of the UPR.

### Key Participation Proposals Include:

- **Establish a Civil Society Envoy and Civil Society Advisory Council** to assist in the coordination of UN civil society focal points, and develop good practices on participation across the UN system. This would include incorporating existing guidance on civil society participation, such as the UN Guidance Note on protection and promotion of civic space and the upcoming UN Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming.
- **Establish a UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA), World Citizens' Initiative (UNWCI) and develop guidelines for the inputs of deliberative Global Citizens' Assemblies (GCAs).**
- **Consider the OCA proposal for "an updated resolution defining how organs like the ECOSOC, the General Assembly and the Security Council relate to civil society, local and regional governments and business actors, and for the President of ECOSOC to convene a general review of arrangements for observer status or consultation in this regard."**

### Additional Ideas from the E-Consultation:

**A new conception** of a social contract anchored in human rights to be agreed by all stakeholders.

**Strengthen linkages** between the 2030 Agenda and human rights.

**How to ensure health**, particularly Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), is available to all across the world?

