CONCEPT NOTE FOR SIDE EVENT TO THE 57TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

"Digital Bridges to Justice: Enhancing Human Rights and SDG Monitoring through Innovative Technologies"

Co-organizers:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Geneva Human Rights Platform of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (GHRP)
- Pacific Community (SPC)

Co-sponsors:

- Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN in Geneva
- Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN in Geneva
- Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the UN in Geneva
- Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the UN in Geneva
- Permanent Mission of Paraguay to the UN in Geneva
- Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN in Geneva

Date and Venue

11 September, 14:00 - 15:00, Geneva/Salle XXII, Palais des Nations and online (webex)

8:00 - 9:00 am, New York, online (webex)

Introduction and objectives:

In the era of digital transformation, leveraging technology for advancing human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is not only innovative but essential. Efforts at the local, national, and international levels to use digital tools for these purposes highlight an increased focus on effective governance, data management, and sustainable digital infrastructures.

This one-hour HRC side-event aims to showcase the transformative potential of digital technologies in advancing human rights and SDG monitoring, particularly through the critical role of National mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up (NMIRFs) and other key actors.The event will present best practices from new and emerging digital human rights tracking tools and databases (DHRTTDs) developed by various stakeholders. Additionally, it will explore partnerships and collaborations between states, international organizations, civil society, and the tech community to advance digitalization in human rights and SDG monitoring.

Notably, in the development field as delineated under the SDGs, one of the 'enablers' of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 2022–2025 Strategic Plan and 2022-2025 Digital Strategy is indeed that of 'supporting countries to build inclusive, ethical and sustainable digital societies' through digitalization.Through its regional digital tracking platform UNDP-SIGOB, UNDP provides digital solutions aimed at improving governance, transparency, and public administration. These efforts support government institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean in monitoring progress towards the SDGs and implementing human rights recommendations.

In parallel, States have established government structures - National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRFs) - to coordinate and prepare reports for, and engage with, international and regional human rights mechanisms, such as the UN Treaty Bodies, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and Special Procedures. A key capacity of NMIRFs is information management, which includes tracking recommendations, systematically organizing them, identifying responsible agencies, developing follow-up plans, and managing implementation data. In the past decade, NMIRFs have led a digital revolution, adopting digital tools and databases to enhance their information management capabilities. The latest report by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/57/73) which is being presented during this HRC session, highlights the digital advancement performed by NMIRFs, emphasizing its transformative impact on national mechanisms' operations. NMIRFs hold significant potential in bringing together national and local actors for both human rights and SDG implementation, including collaboration with local and regional governments (LRGs).

One notable example of such digital tracking tools is IMPACT OSS, which powers SADATA in Samoa and is being adopted by several Pacific island states, linking Agenda 2030 with the work of UN human rights mechanisms. The Pacific Community - SPC is developing a regional version of IMPACT OSS to facilitate country-level application while maintaining data sovereignty.

The new Geneva Human Rights Platform publication explores this 'Human Rights Data Revolution', examining best practices and challenges faced by new and emerging information management tools developed by various human rights stakeholders, including the UN Secretariat, UN agencies, regional human rights mechanisms, NMIRFs, national human rights institutions

(NHRIs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and academics worldwide. By utilizing tools like the OHCHR's National Recommendations Tracking Database, Paraguay's SIMORE PLUS, or IMPACT OSS, national stakeholders can effectively synergize efforts across different governance levels. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the implementation of human rights but also enhances the overall effectiveness of achieving the SDGs. 8

This event aligns with the in-depth review of SDG 16 at the HLPF 2024, which focused on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

Agenda:

1. **Opening Remarks:**

   - H.E. Ana Edelmira Rolón Candia, Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative and Chargée d'affaires a.i., Permanent Mission of Paraguay to the UN in Geneva

2. **Panel Discussion: "Digitalization in Action - Case Studies and Insights"**

   - Maria-Eugenia Boza, Head of UNDP-SIGOB, UNDP Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean (online participation)

   - Mahamane Cissé-Gouro, Director of the Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division, OHCHR

   - Ashley Bowe, Chief of Party - PROJECT Governance, Human Rights and Social Development Division, Pacific Community - SPC

   - Domenico Zipoli, Project Coordinator, Geneva Human Rights Platform

3. **Closing Remarks:**

   - Agi Veres, Director of the UNDP Office in Geneva

4. **Q&A session with audience participation**

Moderator: Felix Kirchmeier, Executive Director, Geneva Human Rights Platform