

Human rights are 'key' for economic policymaking says UN expert

Calling on governments to take human rights obligations into account when designing economic reforms, an independent United Nations rights expert said on Monday that "human rights impact assessments are key to the process".

Highlighting the vital role of human rights on policymaking, the independent expert on foreign debt and human rights, Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, published the [Guiding Principles on Human Rights Impact Assessments of Economic Reforms](#) to assist states, international financial institutions, creditors, civil society and others, to ensure that economic policies are embedded in human rights.

"The thrust of the Guiding Principles is that states cannot shy away from their human rights obligations in economic policymaking, even in times of economic crisis" said Mr. Bohoslavsky in a [press release](#), issued on the eve of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

The UN human rights expert stressed that "any economic policy measures – whether fiscal austerity, structural adjustment reforms, privatisation of public services, deregulation of financial and labour markets, or changes in taxation – all have human rights consequences", adding that the impacts of economic measures have to be taken in consideration, specially on specific individuals and groups "such as women and persons with disabilities".

Mr. Bohoslavsky added that the new Guiding Principles make clear that international financial institutions, creditors and donors must not turn a blind eye to the human rights impact of their loans and grants.

He also called on international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, to ensure that "their loan conditionalities, advice and proposals for economic reforms do not undermine the borrower state's human rights obligations".

The publication will be presented to the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council on 28 February.