

United Nations Human Rights Council
40th Regular Session

Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights

Joint Statement by Conectas Human Rights, together with Ação Educativa, FIAN Brasil, Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos – INESC, Plataforma de Direitos Humanos - DHESCA, Sociedade Maranhense de Direitos Humanos and Terra de Direitos

Delivered by Mr. Gustavo Huppes
February 28th, 2019

Mr. President,

We would like to welcome Mr. Bohoslavsky for his report containing the Guiding Principles on human rights impact assessments of economic reforms.

The absence of a human rights impact assessment prior to the adoption of the Constitutional Amendment 95 in Brazil, labelled the "harshest austerity package of the world", prevented discussion on the potential (and mitigation of) restrictions on social rights. This amendment exacerbated the restrictions on social rights being enacted since 2015. From 2014, the last year before the austerity measures, to 2018, there was an expenditure reduction of 73 percent in agrarian organization policies, 14 percent in education policies, 55 percent in basic sanitation policies and 21 percent in policies towards citizenship rights.

The increase in the inequality indexes in Brazil due to the precariousness of the labor market, an effect of the flexibilization of the labor legislation since 2017, could have been prevented with an ex ante assessment of such reforms or at least mitigated through a participatory and transparent ex post assessment regarding Principle 18.

A continuous monitoring of the economic reform measures adopted in recent years in Brazil, aligned to Principle 7, would allow the adoption of countermeasures capable of preventing an increase of 8.6% infant mortality rate by 2030, according to a recent paper. This study indicates that 124,000 children will be hospitalized and 20,000 children under 5 years old will die in the next decade if nothing is done, with kids from the poorest municipalities being disproportionately more affected.

Finally, we emphasize the need for the Brazilian Government to confirm Mr. Bohoslavsky's country visit to Brazil, postponed a year ago and never rescheduled. Ms. Damares Alves, Brazilian Minister of Human Rights, reassured the country's commitment to UN Special Procedures in this same room. May this become a reality by rescheduling this visit.

Thank you.