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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Human rights and international solidarity

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Obiora Chinedu Okafor, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution [44/11](#).**

* [A/76/150](#).

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Report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Obiora Chinedu Okafor

Summary

The present report is the fourth report prepared for the General Assembly by the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Obiora Chinedu Okafor. In the report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution [44/11](#), the Independent Expert examines the role of the expression of international solidarity for the fuller realization of human rights within the context of economic security and insecurity. The availability or absence of economic security is inherently intertwined with the rights of individuals and peoples to pursue a decent standard of living, maximize their capabilities and live a life of dignity.

I. Introduction

1. In the present report, the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Obiora Chinedu Okafor, examines the role of the expression of international solidarity for the fuller realization of human rights within the context of economic security and insecurity. The availability or absence of economic security is inherently intertwined with the rights of individuals and peoples to pursue a decent standard of living, maximize their capabilities and live a life of dignity.¹ Analyses of the role of international solidarity in the advancement of economic security, and thus in the amelioration of economic insecurity, are critical in the current era, marked as it is by globalization,² interconnected supply chains,³ the increasing deployment of technology in production and the corresponding displacement of traditional labour patterns.⁴ In recent times, economic insecurity has also been induced by a myriad of factors, including the crash in oil prices⁵ and the rise of precarious employment,⁶ propelled partly by growth in the sharing economy.⁷ In addition, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has left many people without adequate sources of income and with limited prospects of finding stable and secure employment, at least in the near term.⁸ These events occur against the backdrop of heightened trade tensions and uncertainties within the international trade regime, which serve as an added layer of pressure, eliciting unpredictable reactions from States and private actors.⁹ At this critical time, the situation leaves individuals and peoples in vulnerable situations that negatively affect their economic security and unduly limit the enjoyment of their human rights, particularly those contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (arts. 2 (1) and 11 (1)–(2)),¹⁰ such as the right to an adequate standard of living (arts. 23 (3) and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the right to work, which are vital to ensure the inherent dignity of the human person (arts. 6–7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

¹ Amartya Sen, “Capability and well-being”, in *The Quality of Life*, Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen, eds. (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 30; Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York, Anchor Books, 1999); Martha C. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development* (Cambridge, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Martha C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen, eds., *The Quality of Life* (Oxford, United Kingdom, and New York, Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press, 1993).

² Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York, W.W. Norton, 2003); and Benedict Oramah and Richman Dzene, “Globalization and the recent trade wars: linkages and lessons”, *Global Policy*, vol. 10, No. 3 (September 2019), pp. 401–404.

³ Gary Gereffi, “Global value chains in a post-Washington consensus world”, *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 21, No. 1 (2014), pp. 9–37.

⁴ Pablo Falco and Andrea Salvatori, “How technology and globalization are transforming the labour market”, in *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Employment Outlook 2017* (Paris, 2017).

⁵ Atif Kubursi, “Oil crash explained: how are negative oil prices even possible?”, *The Conversation*, 20 April 2020.

⁶ Guy Standing, “The precariat”, *Contexts*, vol. 13, No. 4 (Fall 2014), pp. 10–12.

⁷ Alexandra J. Ravenelle, *Hustle and Gig: Struggling and Surviving in the Sharing Economy* (Oakland, California, University of California Press, 2019); and Koen Frenken and Juliet Schor, “Putting the sharing economy into perspective”, in *A Research Agenda for Sustainable Consumption Governance*, Elgar Research Agendas, Oksana Mont, ed. (Cheltenham, United Kingdom, and Northampton, Massachusetts, United States of America, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019).

⁸ International Labour Organization (ILO), “A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis”, policy brief, May 2020; and Rene Pana-Cryan and others, “Economic security during the COVID-19 pandemic: a healthy work design and well-being perspective”, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Science blog, 22 June 2020; see also [A/HRC/44/40](#).

⁹ Bernard Hoekman, “Trade wars and the World Trade Organization: causes, consequences, and change”, *Asian Economic Policy Review*, vol. 15, No. 1 (January 2020), pp. 98–114.

¹⁰ See also article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and [A/75/148](#).

II. Understanding economic security in the context of the expression of international solidarity for the realization of human rights

A. Defining economic security

2. Economic security is a broad concept that has three broad dimensions. First, it could be understood from a State-centric, national security perspective, which underscores attempts by States to protect their national economies from vulnerabilities to the decisions and activities of other States. From this perspective, pursuing economic security is deeply connected to reducing economic overreliance on other States.¹¹

3. From a second perspective, the economic security of States in an increasingly complicated world of transnationalized capital and liberalized trade plays a vital role in determining the economic security of individuals and peoples. However, in the present report, the economic security of States will not be explored in any detail, except to the extent that it plays a vital role in the analysis of the economic security of peoples and individuals.

4. Third, in the sense in which it is used in the present report, economic security can be understood within the broader umbrella of “human security”.¹² From this perspective, economic security has been defined in a variety of ways.¹³ The International Labour Organization (ILO) describes economic security as being “composed of basic social security, defined by access to basic needs infrastructure pertaining to health, education, dwelling, information and social protection, as well as work-related security”.¹⁴ Economic security can also be defined as “the degree to which individuals are protected against hardship-causing economic losses”.¹⁵ Households view themselves as insecure “when perceived risks exceed their expected capacity to adjust to or otherwise buffer those risks in ways that do not cause hardship”.¹⁶

5. There are external and internal elements that induce economic security. The external elements could be shocks that have a direct impact on the economic stability of individuals or peoples. These external shocks could be localized, such as job losses and illness, or they could be global, such as a worldwide economic recession, global financial crisis, oil price slump or unprecedented global events such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. However, external shocks alone do not create economic

¹¹ Miles Kahler, “Economic security in an era of globalization: definition and provision”, *The Pacific Review*, vol. 17, No. 4 (2004), pp. 485–502.

¹² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 1994* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 23. The report revolutionized general conceptions of security, moving from a State-centric to a people-centric conception. Economic security was identified as an essential part of human security.

¹³ George E. Rejda, *Social Insurance and Economic Security* (Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2012), p. 4; Guy Standing, “Economic insecurity and global casualization: threat or promise?”, *Social Indicators Research*, vol. 88, No. 1 (August 2008), pp. 15–30; and ILO, *Economic Security for a Better World* (Geneva, 2004).

¹⁴ ILO Socio-Economic Security Programme, “Definitions: what we mean when we say ‘economic security’” (2004); and ILO, *Economic Security for a Better World*.

¹⁵ Jacob S. Hacker and others, “The Economic Security Index: a new measure for research and policy analysis”, *Review of Income and Wealth*, vol. 60, No. S1 (May 2014), pp. S5–S32 (p. S6).

¹⁶ Jacob S. Hacker, Philipp Rehm and Mark Schlesinger, “The insecure American: economic experiences, financial worries, and policy attitudes”, *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 11, No. 1 (March 2013), pp. 23–49 (p. 25).

insecurity.¹⁷ For economic insecurity to exist, these external shocks must be coupled with another factor – the inability or limited ability to protect oneself from the shocks – which may be further exacerbated by experiencing such shocks within an ecosystem in which social safety systems offer limited or even no protection. The internal dimensions of economic security are therefore crucial because the relevant external shocks may lead to economic insecurity for some (e.g. the poor) but not for others (e.g. the rich), depending on their capacity to buffer those shocks in a way that does not cause hardship.

6. While poverty is often correlated with economic insecurity, they are not synonymous,¹⁸ as economic insecurity may exist even in the absence of poverty. An important dimension of economic insecurity is the crippling and debilitating feeling of uncertainty and lack of safety, premised on the inability to plan a life and a future. As economic security exists when people have “freedom from fear and want”,¹⁹ it is possible not to live in poverty yet to live in fear of want.²⁰ Furthermore, while tackling poverty, narrowly defined, must remain a crucial global and national goal for all State and non-State actors, economic security encompasses a wider set of objectives, including reducing underemployment and ensuring food security.²¹

B. Individuals and peoples affected by economic insecurity

7. While anyone may be affected by external shocks as described above, not everyone will become economically insecure as a result. Therefore, individuals and peoples in vulnerable situations are significantly more prone to economic insecurity. Those in a situation of vulnerability in the specific context of economic insecurity can include women (particularly in rural areas), people in unstable employment,²² disabled persons, older persons, migrants, refugees, minorities and indigenous communities. For example, women tend to be significantly affected by economic insecurity owing to a myriad of issues, including their engagement in unpaid labour, denial of property rights, the gender wage gap and discrimination and sexism at the workplace.²³ Another example is provided by the fact that forcibly displaced persons are also particularly vulnerable to economic insecurity as they tend not to have access to stable employment or financial services, credit and tools.²⁴

8. In addition, certain racialized ethnic groups and indigenous communities within the meaning of the term “peoples” are too often disproportionately susceptible to

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ ILO, *Economic Security for a Better World*; and Siew Mun Tang, “Rethinking economic security in a globalized world”, *Contemporary Politics*, vol. 20, No. 1 (2015), pp. 40–52 (p. 42).

¹⁹ See the preambles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

²⁰ Tang, “Rethinking economic security in a globalized world”, p. 42.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Standing, “The precariat”.

²³ Canada, House of Commons, *Women’s Economic Security: Securing the Future of Canada’s Economy – Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women* (2018); and Natasha Cortis and Jane Bullen, *Domestic Violence and Women’s Economic Security: Building Australia’s Capacity for Prevention and Redress – Final Report* (Sydney, Australia’s National Research Organization for Women’s Safety, 2016).

²⁴ Karen Jacobsen, “The economic security of refugees: social capital, remittances, and humanitarian assistance”, in *Global Migration: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*, Kavita R. Khory, ed. (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 65–66.

economic insecurity.²⁵ Both the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (arts. 1 (1) and 25) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (arts. 17 (1)–(2)) recognize the economic rights of “all peoples” to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources and their right not to be deprived of their means of subsistence. Specifically, the term “peoples” includes indigenous and ethnic minority communities, whose enjoyment of economic security is inextricably connected to the use of their lands and resources.²⁶ A vital dimension of securing economic security for such ethnic groups and indigenous peoples is their enjoyment of security of land tenure.²⁷

9. Economic insecurity also disproportionately affects individuals and peoples in the global South, where there is limited access to social safety nets and significant economic activities occur in the informal economy, which in many cases involves work that cannot be categorized as decent.²⁸ This situation is further exacerbated by the financial incapacity of many countries of the global South that are overly indebted and spend more on debt servicing than on critical social welfare.²⁹

C. Importance of international solidarity for economic security

10. International solidarity is urgently needed to tackle economic insecurity because the cause-and-effect relationships with regard to the latter often transcend borders, and it is in most cases irrelevant whether the stimulus that induced the incidence of economic insecurity at issue is of a local or global nature. The United Nations Development Programme explains that:

The components of human security are interdependent. When the security of people is endangered anywhere in the world, all nations are likely to get involved. Famine, disease, pollution, drug trafficking, terrorism, ethnic disputes and social disintegration are no longer isolated events, confined within national borders. Their consequences travel the globe.³⁰

11. People worldwide continue to adjust to the effects of globalization, interconnected markets, the rise of the sharing economy, job displacements due to the automation of industrial production and the COVID-19 pandemic. All these factors have revealed the precarious economic position of people globally and the limited extent of their economic security. These events have also highlighted the deeply negative impacts that economic insecurity can have everywhere in the world on the

²⁵ Trina Jones, “Occupying America: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the American dream, and the challenge of socio-economic inequality”, *Villanova Law Review*, vol. 57, No. 2 (2012), pp. 339–356; Paul Attewell, Philip Kasinitz and Kathleen Dunn, “Black Canadians and black Americans: racial income inequality in comparative perspective”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 33, No. 3 (2010), pp. 473–495; and Francis Markham and Nicholas Biddle, *Income, Poverty and Inequality*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research 2016 Census Paper, No. 2 (Canberra, 2018).

²⁶ Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Kaliña and Lokono Peoples v. Suriname*, Judgment, 25 November 2015, paras. 138–139; see also African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, *Centre for Minority Rights Development (Kenya) and Minority Rights Group International on behalf of Endorois Welfare Council v. Kenya*, Document No. 276/2003, 4 February 2010; and African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, *Centre for Minority Rights Development, Minority Rights Group International and Ogiek Peoples Development Programme (on behalf of the Ogiek Community) v. Republic of Kenya*, Communication No. 381/09.

²⁷ OECD, “The importance of land for indigenous economic development”, in *Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development in Canada*, OECD Rural Policy Reviews (2020).

²⁸ Ellen Ehmke, “Introduction: State responses to insecurity”, in *Socio-Economic Insecurity in Emerging Economies: Building New Spaces*, Khayaat Fakier and Ellen Ehmke, eds. (Abingdon, United Kingdom, Routledge, 2014).

²⁹ Boileau Loko and others, “The impact of external indebtedness on poverty in low-income countries”, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Working Paper, No. WP/03/61 (IMF, 2003).

³⁰ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, pp. 3 and 22.

enjoyment of human rights. While economic problems are often managed nationally by States, in an interconnected world, approaching the stimuli that induce economic insecurity, and economic insecurity itself, from the perspective of international solidarity presents an opportunity for a coherent approach to resolving these problems, with the attendant benefits in the realization of human rights.

12. This is particularly crucial as a lack of economic security often perpetuates opportunistic behaviour, extremism and desperation, which has spillover effects across borders. To illustrate this, the lack of and quest for economic security, and not merely poverty, is a significant reason for irregular migration. It has also fuelled reactionary populist tendencies in various States, particularly from those who believe that their safe, stable and secure jobs have been “stolen” by peoples in other States owing to international trade.³¹ Irregular migration, populism and heightened protectionism are global issues stemming in part from national problems that have been partly induced by economic insecurity. All of these have, in turn, had important negative impacts on the enjoyment of human rights.

13. It is critical, therefore, to do significantly more in terms of discussing and acting upon economic security and insecurity as an international solidarity issue, instead of largely relegating it to the arena of national concern. International solidarity can and should be harnessed to prevent or limit the effects of economic shocks and their negative human rights impacts, and also to equip individuals and peoples with the capacity to cope with and recover from such shocks, with the attendant positive human rights effects on their lives.

III. Guarantees of international solidarity for the realization of economic security under international human rights law

14. Guarantees of economic security are firmly rooted in the International Bill of Human Rights, particularly the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as in the Charter of the United Nations, all of which also emphasize the need for international cooperation to improve economic security. Among the purposes of the United Nations, according to its Charter, is the need for international cooperation to, inter alia, improve economic security (art. 1 (3)), and cooperation is a crucial aspect of international solidarity (see [A/HRC/35/35](#), annex). It should also be noted that the level of economic security available to individuals and peoples is directly correlated to their ability to enjoy their fundamental human rights, including their rights to an adequate standard of living, to work and to social security. This argument is developed in the subsections below, which deal with the guarantees of economic security provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

A. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

15. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays the foundation for several rights that directly shape the existence or absence of economic security. Article 22 provides that:

³¹ Nicolas Lamp, “How should we think about the winners and losers from globalization? Three narratives and their implications for the redesign of international economic agreements”, *European Journal of International Law*, vol. 30, No. 4 (November 2019), pp. 1359–1397.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

16. This establishes the need for both national efforts and international cooperation to guarantee social security, which can help to provide economic security, for the attainment of economic and social rights, the full enjoyment of which is imperative for human dignity and the enhancement of human capabilities. These economic and social rights include the right to work (art. 23 (1)), the right to just and favourable remuneration that ensures an existence worthy of human dignity (art. 23 (2)) and the right to an adequate standard of living, including access to food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services (art. 25 (1)). The enjoyment of these rights is guaranteed under international human rights law, even during externally induced shocks or occurrences, such as unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age and other circumstances beyond a person's control.³² The right to social security is guaranteed in article 22 of the Declaration and is also to be realized through national efforts and international cooperation. Moreover, the Declaration guarantees the right to education (art. 26), which is crucial, as the lack of education and the inability to upskill in a rapidly evolving global economy is a key contributor to the level of economic insecurity experienced by a large number of people around the world.

B. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

17. The fact that the realization of the economic and social rights contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is threatened in the absence of economic security is equally important. For one, the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing, housing and the continuous improvement of living conditions, as provided for in the Covenant (art. 11 (1)), cannot be meaningfully realized where economic insecurity persists. Similarly, the meaningful realization of these rights as well as others, such as the right to work (art. 6) and the right to the enjoyment of favourable conditions of work that provide a decent standard of living (art. 7 (a) (ii)), is also threatened by economic insecurity, such as situations that limit the ability of people to find gainful employment and precarious employment, both of which are quite prevalent today around the world.³³ Furthermore, the Covenant recognizes the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance (art. 9; see also [A/HRC/45/15](#), para. 56, and [A/75/167](#), para. 39). Social insurance acts as a barrier between economic shocks and the onset of economic insecurity, and is therefore one of the ways to protect people from the deprivation or increased violation of their economic and social rights.

18. To guarantee the realization of these rights, article 2 (1) of the Covenant explicitly provides that:

Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.

³² Rejda, *Social Insurance and Economic Security*.

³³ Standing, "The precariat".

19. Furthermore, the Covenant recognizes the importance of international cooperation in realizing the right to an adequate standard of living (art. 11 (1)) and also highlights the role of such cooperation in ensuring the right of everyone to be free from hunger (art. 11 (2)).

C. Other human rights instruments

20. Guarantees of economic security can also be found in some other human rights instruments, albeit couched implicitly at times. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination prohibits racial discrimination, a factor that clearly hinders the enjoyment of economic and social rights by racial minorities in many countries around the world (art. 5 (e)).³⁴ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women recognizes, inter alia, the right of women around the world to job security, social security, free choice of profession and employment and their right to work (art. 11). It also recognizes that appropriate measures must be taken to ensure its applicability to rural women, who play a significant role in the economic security of their families (art. 14). For its part, the Convention on the Rights of the Child enjoins States parties to provide assistance to parents of children with disabilities, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child (art. 23), as well as to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (art. 27).

21. Crucially, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families protects the right of migrant workers not to be arbitrarily deprived of property, whether owned individually or in association with others, without due process (art. 15). With respect to remuneration and other conditions of work, migrant workers are also to enjoy treatment no less favourable than that which applies to nationals of the State of employment (art. 25; see also [A/HRC/39/51](#), para. 17, and [A/75/148](#), paras. 39–41) and are entitled to social security in the State of employment where they meet all requirements to benefit from same treatment granted to nationals. In situations in which there is no applicable legislation allowing migrant workers and their family members to benefit from social security, States are to examine the option of reimbursing migrants and treating them in line with the benefits that accrue to nationals of the country of employment who are in similar circumstances (art. 27). Migrants are also guaranteed the right to transfer their savings and earnings to their families (art. 47).

22. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also protects the right of persons with disabilities to work and prohibits, inter alia, discrimination on the basis of disability in relation to employment, career advancement and healthy working conditions (art. 27 (1)). It also recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability (art. 28).

23. It is worth recalling that, under Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter, the legal duty of international cooperation for the realization of all human rights, including those that can function to guarantee economic security, is imposed upon all States Members of the United Nations. It is also worth re-emphasizing that international cooperation is an integral aspect of international solidarity.

³⁴ For an exploration of racial discrimination and economic opportunities, see Lincoln Quillian and others, "Do some countries discriminate more than others? Evidence from 97 field experiments of racial discrimination in hiring", *Sociological Science*, vol. 6 (June 2019), pp. 467–496.

IV. Positive expressions of international solidarity for the fuller realization of human rights within the context of economic security

24. Several proposals have been made over the years towards addressing economic insecurity and its negative impacts on the enjoyment of human rights. Some of these include introducing universal basic incomes,³⁵ social protection floors³⁶ and cash transfer programmes.³⁷ However, these are not the only ways through which economic insecurity can be addressed. Economic insecurity can also be tackled through government-backed insurance schemes, housing schemes, retirement and pension schemes, accessible education for upskilling, and information and training on financial literacy and savings.³⁸ Research, education and advocacy on economic security also advance economic security for all.³⁹ Essentially, any scheme that reduces or eliminates the impact of insecurity-inducing circumstances on individuals and peoples, or that empowers them to better react to external shocks, contributes to the enhancement of economic security.

25. The present section approaches the discussion of positive expressions of international solidarity in relation to economic security and insecurity from two major dimensions. It explores, first, a non-exhaustive list of initiatives designed to tackle economic insecurity and, second, some of the positive expressions of international solidarity in that context by States, international organizations and multi-party coalitions.

A. Solidarity-based initiatives designed to tackle economic insecurity and realize certain human rights

Universal basic income programmes

26. Universal basic incomes are periodic and unconditional cash payments given to all individuals within a State without proof of means and are sometimes referred to as a basic income, citizen's income or citizen's basic income.⁴⁰ Basic income is recognized as a promising way to help to eliminate economic insecurity, and its proponents argue that it can reduce poverty for the most economically vulnerable and is cheap to administer, less prone to errors and stigma-free, since it is given to everyone irrespective of their need.⁴¹ With the evolving nature of the global economy, universal basic income has been prescribed as an opportunity to "forge a more inclusive social contract" that is fit for the present age.⁴²

27. Currently, no country in the world has a universal basic income. However, there are several pilot schemes designed to explore its viability. These efforts include studies collaboratively designed and sponsored by Governments, research institutions, organizations and donors. The GiveDirectly experiment on universal basic income is a \$30 million project covering 20,000 individuals living in 197 communities in rural

³⁵ Louise Haagh, *The Case for Universal Basic Income* (Medford, Massachusetts, Polity Press, 2019).

³⁶ UNDP, ILO and Global South-South Development Academy, *Sharing Innovative Experiences: Successful Social Protection Floor Experiences*, vol. 18 (New York, 2011).

³⁷ Guy Standing, "How cash transfers promote the case for basic income", *Basic Income Studies*, vol. 3, No. 1 (April 2008), p. 11.

³⁸ ILO, *Economic Security for a Better World*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴⁰ See <https://basicincome.org/about-basic-income>.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; see also A/HRC/31/60, para. 66.

⁴² Ugo Gentilini and others, eds., *Exploring Universal Basic Income: A Guide to Navigating Concepts, Evidence, and Practices* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2020).

Kenya. It is the longest and largest experiment on the effects of universal basic income and is collaboratively funded by public and private sector actors, including the United States Agency for International Development, Google, the Global Innovation Fund and GiveWell.⁴³ The experiment is designed to explore whether universal basic income can improve economic, health, social and macroeconomic well-being. The 12-year study began in 2017, and the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a unique, but unfortunate, opportunity to assess the impact of the project against the backdrop of an external and unforeseen shock likely to induce economic insecurity.⁴⁴ Initial analysis of the programme has shown improved well-being according to parameters such as hunger, sickness, depression and hospital visits.⁴⁵

28. The Stanford Basic Income Lab is another collaborative initiative that provides information and data on universal basic income experiments globally and is a hub that aggregates all the basic income experiments across the globe.⁴⁶ The scheme is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Jain Family Institute, the Economic Security Project and the McCoy Family Center for Ethics in Society.⁴⁷

29. The collaborative nature of these projects across States, geopolitical zones of the world and the government/non-governmental organization (NGO) axis, and their positive impacts in preliminary results, suggest that they are positive expressions of international solidarity that can address the kinds of economic insecurity that have a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights across the world.

30. Nevertheless, critiques of basic income are rife, and it has been argued that basic income schemes reduce incentives to work.⁴⁸ Furthermore, basic income requires the expenditure of budgetary allocations by States, which raises questions about the abilities of those States to bear the financial obligations that this entails.⁴⁹

31. Some States have also conducted their own basic income experiments, with varying levels of success, including the universal basic income experiment of the Government of Finland from 2017 to 2018, the Alaska Permanent Fund in the United States of America (which has been in operation for over 30 years) and the Amiri grant programme of Kuwait.⁵⁰ However, only the basic income programmes of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Mongolia fulfil the characteristics of a true basic income scheme in that they are guaranteed, cash-based, universal, State-provided, national in scope and provided with frequency.⁵¹ The Basic Income Grant project of the Government of Namibia⁵² provided \$100 dollars to 930 residents in the Otjivero-Omitara community below the age of 60 (the age at which they qualify for a government pension) from January to December 2009 and was the first universal basic income pilot programme in the world.⁵³ The project recorded a significant drop in poverty in the community,

⁴³ See www.givedirectly.org/funders-and-partners.

⁴⁴ Abhijit Banerjee and others, "Effects of a universal basic income during the pandemic", September 2020.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ See <https://basicincome.stanford.edu/experiments-map>.

⁴⁷ Stanford Basic Income Lab, Global Map of Basic Income Experiments database, available at <https://basicincome.stanford.edu/research/basic-income-experiments>.

⁴⁸ Gentilini and others, *Exploring Universal Basic Income*, p. 100.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ For a comprehensive list of basic income initiatives, see *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵² Claudia Haarmann and others, *Making the Difference! The BIG in Namibia: Basic Income Grant Pilot Project Assessment Report, April 2009* (Windhoek, Namibia, Namibia Non-Governmental Organisations Forum, 2009); and Claudia Haarmann and others, *Towards a Basic Income Grant for All: Basic Income Grant Pilot Project Assessment Report, September 2008* (Windhoek, Namibia Non-Governmental Organisations Forum, 2008).

⁵³ Ibid.

from 76 per cent to 16 per cent for families with no addition to their size since the start of the programme, and to 36 per cent for families that recorded in-migration.⁵⁴ Economic activities also increased by over 10 per cent, with improved outcomes in child malnutrition and education and an overall reduction in crime.⁵⁵

32. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of stimulus packages by States, the conversation on basic income may have been galvanized, especially with increasing agitation for a basic income in countries such as Canada.⁵⁶ These collaborative and State-based efforts to implement basic income schemes provide policymakers in other States with tools to craft similar schemes that can better achieve the desired effects.

Social protection floors

33. According to ILO, more than half of the world's population lacks social security, a key driver of economic security.⁵⁷ The Social Protection Floor Initiative was proposed by ILO as one of nine United Nations joint initiatives to address the 2007–2008 economic crisis.⁵⁸ Social protection floors are nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees that secure protection aimed at enhancing economic security by preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion over the life cycle.⁵⁹ The Social Protection Floor Initiative advocates transfers, either in cash or in kind, to ensure that people have a guaranteed minimum income and access to the essentials of life and social services. It also advocates income security for the vulnerable in accordance with national priorities.⁶⁰

34. Social protection floors align with the fundamental principles of social justice, the right to social security and the right to a standard of living adequate for people's health and well-being.⁶¹ Social protection floors have the potential to sustain a virtuous cycle of (rights-based) development and economic security as they provide basic protection against, and potential escape from, high levels of economic insecurity. Unlike other conceptions of social support that are needs-based, social protection floors take a rights-based approach.⁶² While the Social Protection Floor Initiative recognizes that there is a margin of appreciation in implementing social protection floors, it nonetheless recommends that such floors should be embedded within existing national strategies for the extension of social security.⁶³

35. States are thus at liberty to adopt different approaches to implementing the Social Protection Floor Initiative and consider specific institutional structures, economic constraints, political dynamics and social aspirations, although social protection floors should be understood as a first step towards higher levels of

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Sejla Rizvic, "The COVID-19 pandemic shows us what universal basic income could look like in Canada", Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 25 August 2020.

⁵⁷ ILO, *Universal Social Protection for Human Dignity, Social Justice and Sustainable Development* (Geneva, 2019).

⁵⁸ Fabio Bertranou, "The social protection floor initiative", ILO Notes on the Crisis, 2010.

⁵⁹ See www.ilo.org/secsoc/areas-of-work/policy-development-and-applied-research/social-protection-floor/lang--en/index.htm; and ILO, *Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization: Report of the Advisory Group Chaired by Michelle Bachelet – Convened by the ILO with the Collaboration of the WHO* (Geneva, 2011). See also A/HRC/44/40, paras. 36–39, A/HRC/31/60, para. 66, A/HRC/36/40, para. 62, and A/HRC/47/36, paras. 10–14.

⁶⁰ ILO, *Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization*.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid. See also the right to social security in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (arts. 22 and 25) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (arts. 9, 11 and 12).

⁶³ ILO, *Universal Social Protection for Human Dignity*.

protection.⁶⁴ Since social protection floors can be implemented in various ways, this allows for innovation and adaptation to local circumstances.⁶⁵

36. There are several examples of social protection floor programmes that other States can emulate, including the universal non-contributory pension programme in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Renta Dignidad (dignity pension), which provides monthly, universal and lifetime payments to citizens above the age of 60.⁶⁶ In India, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme guarantees 100 days of employment for each rural household per year, reaching a total of over 52 million households.⁶⁷ The universal child allowance for families in Argentina (Asignación Universal por Hijo) provides cash transfers and access to essential services for children of informal economy workers, the unemployed and people who have not made contributions to established schemes.⁶⁸ The social protection floor initiative of Brazil, the Bolsa Família conditional cash transfer programme, makes the receipt of cash transfers conditional on children's health and education outcomes, such as enrolling children in school and meeting inoculation timelines.⁶⁹ The means-tested cash transfer programme of South Africa, the child support grant, has been described as one of the Government's most successful poverty alleviation programmes.⁷⁰ China has also introduced health coverage for the population and introduced a pilot rural pension scheme with the aim of supporting over 700 million people living in rural areas by 2020.⁷¹

Cash transfers

37. Cash transfers are another method through which economic security, and therefore certain human rights, can be more fully realized. Unlike universal basic income, which is unconditional, cash transfers can be conditional or unconditional and are useful as emergency and development aid. One example is the cash transfer programme of Ethiopia, designed to provide financial relief to households that experience crop failure.⁷² Unconditional cash transfers are, however, closer in form to universal basic income.⁷³

38. Around the world, Governments have introduced cash transfer programmes based on various eligibility requirements in order to buffer the exposure of their citizens to the economic shocks induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, in response to the pandemic, the Government of Canada introduced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit of \$2,000 per month for people who met specific eligibility criteria.⁷⁴ While cash transfers have traditionally been considered less effective than more robust social protection programmes, the frequency of discussions

⁶⁴ ILO, *Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization*.

⁶⁵ UNDP, ILO and Global South-South Development Academy, *Sharing Innovative Experiences*.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 47.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 271.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

⁶⁹ Janine Berg, "Brazil conditional transfers as response to the crisis the Bolsa Família Programme", ILO Notes on the Crisis, 2009.

⁷⁰ UNDP, ILO and Global South-South Development Academy, *Sharing Innovative Experiences*, p. 363.

⁷¹ ILO, *Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive*.

⁷² Standing, "How cash transfers promote the case for basic income", p. 11.

⁷³ Evelyn L. Forget, Alexander Peden and Stephenson Strobel, "Cash transfers, basic income and community building", *Social Inclusion*, vol. 1, No. 2 (2013), pp. 84–91; see also [A/75/167](#), para. 51, and [A/HRC/47/36](#), paras. 10–11.

⁷⁴ Ugo Gentilini, "A game changer for social protection? Six reflections on COVID-19 and the future of cash transfers", World Bank blogs, 11 January 2021.

about the potential of cash transfer programmes seems to have increased significantly in the light of the pandemic.⁷⁵

Deploying the social and solidarity economy

39. The social and solidarity economy movement comprises organizations and enterprises (including cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, community-based savings and loans schemes, self-help groups, foundations and social enterprises) that produce and exchange goods and services while pursuing explicit social objectives.⁷⁶ It is hinged upon cooperation, solidarity, ethics and democratic self-management, with equity, equality and social protection as its central driving forces.⁷⁷ Social and solidarity economy organizations and enterprises prioritize social objectives above profit maximization in a bid to empower members of society who are vulnerable and disadvantaged.⁷⁸ The movement is seen as a vital component for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.⁷⁹ Social and solidarity economy organizations and enterprises, such as self-help groups, cooperatives and collaborative schemes with Governments, have emerged in the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and South Africa, among other States.⁸⁰

B. Positive expressions of international solidarity to address economic insecurity in aid of the realization of human rights

40. The effects of economic insecurity, including its negative impact on the enjoyment of certain human rights, very often transcend borders. In recognition of this, several international and local actors have actively collaborated to address the issue.

States

41. States remain the primary players in national and international efforts to guarantee economic security for all, albeit only to the extent of their differing capacities, and often in solidarity with each another. For example, Canada demonstrates international solidarity in this regard in a number of ways, including by deploying programmes to support the economic security of refugees in Canada.⁸¹ This support takes various forms, including providing temporary housing and monthly income support payments to eligible refugees for up to a year, mental health support and newcomer employment programmes.⁸² These services are often delivered in collaboration with service provider organizations under the resettlement assistance programme, including NGOs and faith-based organizations.⁸³

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Peter Utting, *Public Policies for Social and Solidarity Economy: Assessing Progress in Seven Countries* (Geneva, ILO, 2017).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ilcheong Yi and others, "Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: what role for social and solidarity economy?", conference summary of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy, Geneva, June 2019.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ See www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=098&top=11.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ See www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-within-canada/government-assisted-refugee-program/providers.html.

42. The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland⁸⁴ has undertaken several international solidarity activities aimed at boosting economic security, and thus certain human rights, in other States, including the recent donation of 879 million Swiss francs to replenish the resources available to the International Development Association and the African Development Fund to fight against poverty, promote sustainable development and tackle the COVID-19 crisis.⁸⁵

43. Australia, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland finance the Rapid Social Response programme multi-donor trust fund in collaboration with the World Bank to help States globally to build effective social protection systems. The trust fund has executed several projects in Asia, the Middle East and Africa.⁸⁶ It operates on the premise that the world is increasingly exposed to shocks, including climate, economic and conflict shocks, thereby requiring Governments to support households to mitigate the effects of such occurrences.⁸⁷ The trust fund has supported projects in Côte d'Ivoire and Nepal.⁸⁸

44. In addition to financial assistance, thought leadership is important in the expression of international solidarity for addressing economic insecurity and its negative impacts on the enjoyment of many human rights throughout the world. Thought leadership flowing from research and a thorough understanding of the problems occasioned by economic insecurity would greatly inform the development of more effective global solutions. Collaborative research on economic security and insecurity, such as the research that led to the ILO economic security report (supported by the Government of the Netherlands, through its partnership with ILO, and through grants by the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation),⁸⁹ contributes to understanding of pressing issues related to economic security and insecurity and provides tools to help policymakers to develop viable programmes that improve the economic security of people.

45. Technical capacity-building is another means through which States express international solidarity for promoting economic security and thus human rights. The Technical Aid Corps programme of Nigeria, which began in 1987, is an expression of South-South cooperation in this area.⁹⁰ Through the programme, skilled Nigerian professionals in various fields that can help to boost economic security, including medicine, law, nursing and agriculture, volunteer to be deployed to participating African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The Government of Nigeria deploys them to support the growth and development of participating countries.⁹¹ Similarly, Cuba has historically sent medical volunteers to various countries as an act of international solidarity that can help to boost economic security in those States.⁹²

46. The Cooperative Development Program funded by the United States Agency for International Development supports and partners with cooperatives in agriculture,

⁸⁴ Switzerland, Federal Council, "Switzerland supports the development banks in reducing poverty and overcoming crises", 27 May 2020.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ See www.worldbank.org/en/programs/rapidsocialresponseprogram.

⁸⁷ World Bank, "Rapid social response programme: building adaptive social protection systems to protect the poor and vulnerable", 2020.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ ILO, *Economic Security for a Better World*.

⁹⁰ Wale Adebani, "Government-led service: the example of the Nigerian Technical Aid Corps", *Voluntary Action*, vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2005).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Pol De Vos and others, "Cuba's international cooperation in health: an overview", *International Journal of Health Services*, vol. 37, No. 4 (October 2007), pp. 761–776; see also [A/HRC/38/40/Add.1](#).

finance, health, energy and information technology.⁹³ For example, projects include a partnership with three cacao cooperatives in Peru to improve productivity and the quality of their harvests, following a reduction in international demand due to low-quality produce. The cooperatives increased productivity by 100 per cent and earned \$5 million in premiums, thereby improving the economic security of their members.⁹⁴

International organizations

47. International organizations, such as ILO, have been at the forefront of promoting economic security and thus human rights, while recognizing the multifaceted dimensions of economic security, and have taken a leadership role in aggregating knowledge and research and implementing policies in this regard.⁹⁵ The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work recognizes several imperatives that need to be addressed in the light of changes in the global economy. These imperatives include ensuring the protection of vulnerable people, eradicating forced and child labour, promoting decent work for all, helping informal workers to transit into the formal economy and paying attention to rural areas.⁹⁶ ILO also emphasizes the importance of decent work for those affected by conflict, disaster and other humanitarian emergencies.⁹⁷

48. ILO championed the Social Protection Floor Initiative and has consistently produced information on its implementation. Volume 18 of the *Sharing Innovative Experiences* report, which is a collaborative effort between the United Nations Development Programme, ILO and the Global South-South Development Academy, aggregates several social protection floor experiences and provides a platform for countries interested in similar initiatives to learn from the 18 case studies on social protection floor policies conducted in 15 countries of the global South.⁹⁸ This is a positive and exemplary expression of international solidarity in this area.

49. Beyond traditional suggestions for promoting economic security, such as universal basic income and social protection floors, ILO recognizes that knowledge of economic options and understanding of financial systems contributes to economic security, and thus the fuller realization of human rights.⁹⁹ It has introduced a social finance programme that examines how the financial system can be deployed for the promotion of decent work and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in order to guarantee “more jobs, better jobs and the right jobs”,¹⁰⁰ all of which would contribute to economic security. In 2019, the programme focused on banks, microfinance institutions and credit unions working on financial inclusion, insurers engaged in impact insurance and investors engaged in sustainable investing.¹⁰¹

50. Through the social finance initiative, ILO collaborated with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of Zimbabwe to train 100 teachers on financial education concepts. The premise is that teachers who understand and use financial instruments can teach their students to become more financially literate, so that the students can in turn make decisions that improve their economic conditions. ILO has also partnered with the Ministry of Social Development and the National Microcredit Commission of Argentina to develop a financial

⁹³ See www.usaid.gov/local-faith-and-transformative-partnerships/cooperative-development-program.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ UNDP, ILO and Global South-South Development Academy, *Sharing Innovative Experiences*.

⁹⁶ ILO *Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work*, 2019; see also [A/HRC/39/51](#), para. 17.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ UNDP, ILO and Global South-South Development Academy, *Sharing Innovative Experiences*.

⁹⁹ ILO, *Social Finance Annual Report 2019* (Geneva, 2020).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

education programme.¹⁰² It has advised Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Sierra Leone and Tunisia on similar financial inclusion programmes.¹⁰³

Multi-party efforts

51. Several other kinds of international cooperation efforts have also been deployed to improve economic security. The Promoting Micro and Small Enterprises through Improved Entrepreneurs' Access to Financial Services initiative is a three-year programme developed cooperatively by ILO and the State Secretariat of Economic Affairs of Switzerland. It aims to promote sustainable and responsible financial inclusion for microenterprises and small enterprises.¹⁰⁴

52. It is not unusual for precarious persons to be one health problem away from descending into a state of economic insecurity and, sometimes, poverty. This is why in 2017 the National Health Insurance Agency of Ghana, in partnership with the ILO Impact Insurance Facility and the Agence Française de Développement, began a project to enable digital health insurance renewals on mobile phones, thereby removing roadblocks to people having access to health insurance.¹⁰⁵

53. Women's World Banking is an NGO comprising a coalition of 51 institutions in 28 countries that work to reach low-income women with financial services.¹⁰⁶ They focus on ensuring that financial service providers meet women's needs and achieve this through training and innovative financial products. Core funders include the Government of Australia, Visa Foundation and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. Women's World Banking has championed projects for facilitating women's financial inclusion in several countries.¹⁰⁷ The organization also advocates gender lens investing through its Capital Partners Fund, a private equity limited partnership that invests equity in women-focused financial institutions.¹⁰⁸ This is an example of collective action that not only addresses financial inclusion generally but also tackles financial inclusion as it relates to women, which is an economic security issue.

54. Other multi-party initiatives designed to enhance economic security include the partnership for improving prospects for host communities and forcibly displaced persons, which is a 94 million euro initiative supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and implemented by the International Finance Corporation, ILO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank. The programme is to run from 2019 to 2023 and is designed to ensure that displaced communities have access to economic opportunities.¹⁰⁹ The objective is to collaboratively re-envision how stakeholders, including social partners and the private sector, respond to forced displacement crises.¹¹⁰ Other charitable organizations, such as the Basic Income Earth Network, support the quest for economic security by providing education on basic income.¹¹¹

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Aparna Dalal, Lisa Morgan and Shilpi Nanda, "National Health Insurance Agency, Ghana", case brief, May 2019.

¹⁰⁶ See www.womensworldbanking.org/about-us.

¹⁰⁷ See www.womensworldbanking.org/insights-and-impact/page_category/country-strategies-2019.

¹⁰⁸ See www.womensworldbanking.org/gender-lens-investing.

¹⁰⁹ See www.ilo.org/global/programmes-and-projects/prospects/WCMS_725066/lang--en/index.htm.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ See <https://basicincome.org/about-basic-income>.

V. International solidarity gaps in the context of economic security that can have a negative impact on the enjoyment of certain human rights

55. Despite the examples of positive expressions of international solidarity in the context of economic security, significant international solidarity gaps remain in this area.

A. Separation of trade policy from national welfare

56. There has been increasing and often justified criticism of neoliberal trade policies.¹¹² The increase in populist sentiments and economic nationalism is also connected to discontent with the impact of the current character of the global trading system on the lives of ordinary people in most of the world. While it has been claimed that, at the global level, liberalized trade has helped the “economic pie” to grow to some extent, the question of the equitable distribution of the pie has been another matter.¹¹³ In any case, the pie has certainly not been equitably shared.¹¹⁴ The implementation of trade policy usually produces both winners and losers, and even whole swathes of losing societies. Rarely, if ever, have global trade policies benefited all the affected parties equitably.¹¹⁵

57. While the gains from international trade have been concentrated in specific hands (usually in the global North and among certain sections of economic elites in countries of the global South), the losers from trade liberalization, who are economically vulnerable, have too often been left either virtually uncompensated or to be compensated at the national level.¹¹⁶ This is a situation that appears to have been accepted as normal by most actors in the international community. Even when national trade adjustment assistance programmes that can help to ameliorate the situation are introduced in the wake of new international trade deals, they are often temporary, require renegotiation and reauthorization and are not guaranteed.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, the international trade agreements that necessitated such assistance schemes are rarely renegotiated.

58. Moreover, many countries do not have national trade assistance programmes, creating a situation in which their gains from international trade tend to be available to a segment of the population while the losers are left to fend for themselves, leading to the significant augmentation of economic insecurity. The related rise in inequality is now attracting more attention following the increasing realization that leaving all welfare considerations to the power of market forces or national welfare schemes tends not to lead to equitable or desirable results.¹¹⁸ For economic security to be guaranteed, an evaluation of the relatively prevalent dichotomy between international trade and social welfare needs to be concretely considered at the international level, and decisive action taken.

¹¹² Jackie Smith, “Globalizing resistance: the battle of Seattle and the future of social movements”, *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, vol. 6, No. 1 (March 2001), pp. 1–19; and Clyde Summers, “The battle in Seattle: free trade, labor rights, and societal values”, *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Economic Law*, vol. 22, No. 1 (2000–2001), pp. 61–90.

¹¹³ Harlan Grant Cohen, “What is international trade law for?”, *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 113, No. 2 (April 2009), pp. 326–346.

¹¹⁴ Lamp, “How should we think about the winners and losers from globalization?”.

¹¹⁵ Michael J. Trebilcock, *Advanced Introduction to International Trade Law*, 2nd ed. (Cheltenham, United Kingdom, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015).

¹¹⁶ Cohen, “What is international trade law for?”.

¹¹⁷ Timothy Meyer, “Misaligned lawmaking”, *Vanderbilt Law Review*, vol. 73, No. 1 (2020), pp. 151–221.

¹¹⁸ Cohen, “What is international trade law for?”.

B. Impediments to the economic security of certain groups and peoples

59. There are several impediments that limit the economic security of certain populations, such as women and those living in the global South. For instance, while several countries of the global South rely heavily on remittances from abroad to provide for the basic needs of huge segments of their citizenry, the cost of making remittances to those States is high, particularly in Africa. The World Bank estimates that remittances cost an average of 6.75 per cent of the amount transferred, while the average cost of remittances in sub-Saharan Africa is 8.47 per cent.¹¹⁹ This leads to a consequential reduction in the level of economic security that can be provided by the remittances sent to those countries.

60. Another impediment to economic security is the omission of people who work in the informal economy, or those in low-income households, from unemployment insurance calculations.¹²⁰ Women also face barriers to economic security, and these include the gender wage gap,¹²¹ restriction of their participation in certain economic activities and professions¹²² and gender and sexual-based violence, which may limit their pursuit of advanced education, undermine their ability to work and leave them vulnerable to health problems.¹²³

C. Market failure, regulatory lapses and economic insecurity

61. While globalization has been heralded as being “net positive”, the downside of globally interconnected markets is the difficulty in nationally regulating such interconnected entities, thereby leaving regulatory gaps that expose the underbelly of global economies. Excessive confidence in the self-regulation of markets and lapses in their regulation partly contributed to the 2007–2008 financial crisis.¹²⁴ As the global economy evolves, particularly owing to an increase in the sharing economy and global value chains, it is crucial that innovative approaches to regulation are developed that are well attuned to the potential and actual negative effects of global economic activities on local economies, some of which are affected more than others. The increase in attempts to integrate business and human rights (see [A/HRC/17/31](#), annex), and agitation for sustainable and ethical supply chains,¹²⁵ are positive though hardly sufficient developments in this regard.

D. Heavy indebtedness

62. Heavily indebted States, especially already poor ones, tend to be quite limited in their capacity to provide an adequate standard of living to their people. It is critical, therefore, that such States exercise much more care before taking on a heavy debt load and that debt relief for such States in the global South, many of which already spend a significant portion of their national budgets servicing their existing debts, is readily available.¹²⁶ In situations in which loans are not deployed to legitimate ends, double jeopardy ensues, as the citizens of the borrowing States do not receive the

¹¹⁹ World Bank, *Remittance Prices Worldwide*, No. 35 (September 2020).

¹²⁰ ILO, *Economic Security for a Better World*, p. 123.

¹²¹ Canada, House of Commons, *Women's Economic Security*.

¹²² World Bank, *Women, Business and the Law 2020* (Washington, D.C., 2020).

¹²³ Canada, House of Commons, *Women's Economic Security*.

¹²⁴ Adrian Blundell-Wignall, Paul Atkinson and Se Hoon Lee, “The current financial crisis: causes and policy issues”, *Financial Market Trends*, No. 95 (December 2008).

¹²⁵ Genevieve LeBaron, Jane Lister and Peter Dauvergne, “Governing global supply chain sustainability through the ethical audit regime”, *Globalizations*, vol. 14, No. 6 (2017), pp. 958–975.

¹²⁶ Loko and others, “The impact of external indebtedness”; see also [A/HRC/46/29](#), para. 48.

benefits that could accrue to them from such debts, while the obligation to pay also weighs heavily on the borrowing State.¹²⁷ Debt relief schemes such as the World Bank Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative can reduce a small amount of the debt burden of indebted States.¹²⁸

E. Economic security of indigenous peoples

63. The economic security of indigenous peoples is significantly tied to their ability to exploit their lands.¹²⁹ Activities that seek to undermine their access to, and use of, their lands significantly increase the likelihood of them losing their economic security or facing exacerbated economic insecurity.¹³⁰ Indigenous people tend to be in an even more precarious position than most other groups, considering the prejudices that tend to limit their ability to advance in broader society in the States of which they are now a part.¹³¹

64. In addition to the colonial dispossessions of their land rights, indigenous peoples often have to pursue extensive litigation to have their human rights recognized.¹³² Litigation is usually an expensive process, not counting its other emotional costs, which are difficult to quantify. Even when judgments are granted in their favour, indigenous peoples often have to fight for the enforcement of such rulings and, in several cases, such litigation has taken several years.¹³³ In the interim, however, indigenous peoples continue to endure continuous infringement of their property rights.¹³⁴

65. These violations occur despite growing international recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, through such instruments as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex) and other regional texts and mechanisms. In particular, article 10 of the Declaration provides that indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territory without giving their free, prior and informed consent and after just and fair compensation, with the option of return, where possible.

¹²⁷ João Tovar Jalles, “The impact of democracy and corruption on the debt-growth relationship in developing countries”, *Journal of Economic Development*, vol. 36, No. 4 (December 2011), pp. 41–72.

¹²⁸ World Bank, *Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI): Statistical Update*, IMF Policy Paper (Washington, D.C., 2019).

¹²⁹ OECD, “The importance of land for indigenous economic development”.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Donna J. MacIsaac and Harry Anthony Patrinos, “Labour market discrimination against indigenous people in Peru”, *Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 32, No. 2 (1995–1996), pp. 218–233.

¹³² Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Kaliña and Lokono Peoples v. Suriname*; African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, *Centre for Minority Rights Development (Kenya) and Minority Rights Group International on behalf of Endorois Welfare Council v. Kenya*; and African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, *Centre for Minority Rights Development, Minority Rights Group International and Ogiek Peoples Development Programme (on behalf of the Ogiek Community) v. Republic of Kenya*.

¹³³ Open Society Foundations, *Strategic Litigation Impacts: Indigenous Peoples’ Land Rights* (New York, 2017).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

66. Economic security and insecurity are crucial issues today, and the availability or absence of economic security significantly determines whether or not individuals and peoples worldwide are able to enjoy many of their human rights. The interconnected nature of the global economy makes it grossly inadequate to largely deal with economic security within the national realm. Significantly greater levels of international solidarity, including the cooperation that this entails, are needed to combat the significant economic insecurity faced by certain masses of individuals and peoples around the world.

67. In the light of the foregoing analysis, the Independent Expert recommends that States and other relevant stakeholders consider the following recommendations in order to enhance economic security, and thus the fuller enjoyment of human rights, globally:

(a) States should increase the priority of economic security in their planning, budgeting and implementation policies. The effects of government policies on the economic security of certain (historically) disadvantaged populations should be critically considered before policies are implemented;

(b) States and international organizations should periodically and regularly conduct impact assessments of the effects of their regulations, laws and policies on the economic security of marginalized populations and groups in vulnerable situations. It is inadequate to examine the potential impact of State policies at a general level without awareness of how such policies affect these groups;

(c) States and international organizations should increase funding for collaborative efforts for enhanced knowledge generation on the nature and effects of economic insecurity around the world, and the output of such research should be widely disseminated;

(d) When negotiating or implementing multilateral trade agreements, States should prepare and act upon comprehensive trade adjustment programmes that are easily renewable and accessible to those who would as a result be pushed (further) into need within and outside their borders as a result of the implementation of such agreements;

(e) The economic security schemes established by States need to be better updated to take account of the changing nature of work, particularly the needs of people working in the sharing and informal economies;

(f) Platforms that allow for international collaborative approaches and cooperation to address economic security and insecurity should be created and encouraged. Such collaboration between States, NGOs and international organizations can help to significantly ameliorate economic insecurity globally;

(g) In the light of their utilization in many States during the COVID-19 pandemic, specific studies should be funded to explore the effects of cash transfer programmes and stimulus packages on the amelioration of economic insecurity;

(h) More debt relief should be granted to the relevant States of the global South or augmented to enhance their capacities to guarantee economic security to their citizens;

(i) In the light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its economic consequences, international solidarity actions need to focus on improving the economic security of persons and groups who have been affected.