



THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
INPUT FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT 2024

29 February 2024

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

The following submission is a contribution to the 2024 United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to be convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from 8 to 17 July 2024. The General Assembly in resolution 75/290 B defined the theme of the 2024 HLPF to be “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions”.

The 2024 HLPF will review in-depth Goals: 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The President of the ECOSOC invited the President of the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide an input to the thematic review of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2024.

This document provides substantive input to the HLPF regarding the Human Rights Council’s contribution to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), and in particular the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets most relevant to its mandate.

### 1.2. Scope

This submission is an analytical overview of initiatives and actions presented at the Human Rights Council that are directly related to the 2030 Agenda and to the SDGs.

It covers all outcomes of regular sessions of the Human Rights Council that took place after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, namely from the 30th session (September 2015) to the 54<sup>th</sup> session (September 2023), with a particular focus of sessions during 2023.

The Human Rights Council is a human rights inter-governmental body of the United Nation. Given the established links between human rights and the 2030 Agenda, virtually all activities and outcomes of the Council may be understood as contributing to the overall aim of “leaving no one behind”. However, this research focuses on Council texts and documents that refer explicitly to the 2030 Agenda or the SDGs.

This document is accompanied by a separate Annex containing a summary of relevant data that may be useful for further analysis. Detailed information and disaggregated data are available for consultation upon request.

### 1.3. Methodology

Data for this research was collected from the following sources:

- All resolutions, decisions (excluding the UPR adoptions) and President's statements adopted by the Council.
- All reports submitted by the Secretary-General (SG), the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HC), and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) following a mandated request.

Search keys include direct mentions of the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (2030 Agenda) and the "Sustainable Development Goals" including each Goal/Target.

Mentions in adopted Council resolutions were classified by their location either in the title or in the body of the document.

This analysis was carried out exclusively based on official documents of the Human Rights Council. Other sources emanating from such activities as panel discussions, side events, the Universal Periodic Review, the work of special procedures, and the Advisory Committee, were not considered, unless they were produced in the form of an SG/HC/OHCHR report. This selection was intention to ensure the highest possible degree of objectivity and transparency.

In relation to the thematic focus and specific SDGs of the 2023 HLPF, this analysis also includes mandated activities of the Council, such as panels, interactive dialogues, and intersessional meetings.

## 2. FINDINGS

### 2.1. Resolutions citing the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda

Between September 2015 and February 2024 (time of writing), the Human Rights Council held 25 regular sessions. It adopted a total of 817 resolutions, decisions, and President's statements (excluding decisions on Universal Periodic Review outcomes) under all of its 10 agenda items.<sup>1</sup>

A total of 357 resolutions mentioned the 2030 Agenda and/or the SDGs, representing 44% of all adopted texts. Of those resolutions, 12 referred to the 2030 Agenda/SDGs in the title (1% of all texts) and 345 in the body of the text (43% of all texts).

Regarding their classification under the Human Rights Council agenda, most SDG references appear in resolutions adopted under the thematic agenda item 3 (87%), "*Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development*". Some references to the 2030 Agenda have also appeared in resolutions relating to States, under the technical cooperation agenda item 10 (4%) and the country situations agenda item 4 (3%). A minor number of references were seen in resolutions under the agenda items relating to human rights bodies; racism; reports of the

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<sup>1</sup> Session-specific disaggregated data is included in the Annex document.

HC/OHCHR/SG; and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1-2% under each item) ([Figure 11](#)).

*Figure 11. HRC resolutions mentioning SDGs/Agenda 2030 disaggregated by HRC agenda item.*

HRC Agenda item	Total number of SDG/2030 Agenda mentions in resolutions
Item 2	<b>3</b>
Item 3	<b>311</b>
Item 4	<b>10</b>
Item 5	<b>5</b>
Item 8	<b>4</b>
Item 9	<b>6</b>
Item 10	<b>18</b>

States have taken a (voluntary) approach to adopt reoccurring thematic resolutions during sessions. As such, references to the 2030 Agenda varies between the three regular sessions in a year. The number of resolutions referring to SDGs/2030 Agenda adopted during June sessions tends to be higher on average (66% of all adopted resolutions), compared to September sessions (39%) and March sessions (35%).

## 2.2. Resolutions in 2023

In 2023, the Council adopted 43 resolutions referring to the SDGs/2030 Agenda (47% of all adopted texts). This is slightly higher than the number of resolutions adopted in 2022. In relative terms, the percentage of resolutions referring to SDGs remains on average around 45% of all adopted resolutions ([Figure 1-2](#)).

Resolutions adopted in 2023 mention the SDGs in the context of a variety of topics. In relation to economic, social and cultural rights, the SDGs/2030 Agenda were mentioned in resolutions on the right to education, health, climate change, water and sanitation, food, birth registration, trafficking in persons, and extreme poverty.

SDGs were also referred to in resolutions concerning the human rights of various groups such as Indigenous Peoples, children, older persons, peasants and persons living in rural areas, and minorities.

Other thematic resolutions of relevance were on good governance, minority issues, unilateral coercive measures, democracy and the rule of law, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, civil society space, arms transfers, right to a nationality, corruption, and emerging digital technologies.

Also, two country resolutions referring to the SDGs/2030 Agenda were adopted under agenda item 10 “Technical assistance and capacity-building”: "Establishment of a regional office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the Caribbean Community, and advisory services and technical assistance for Cambodia.

Figure 1. HRC resolutions referring to SDGs per year

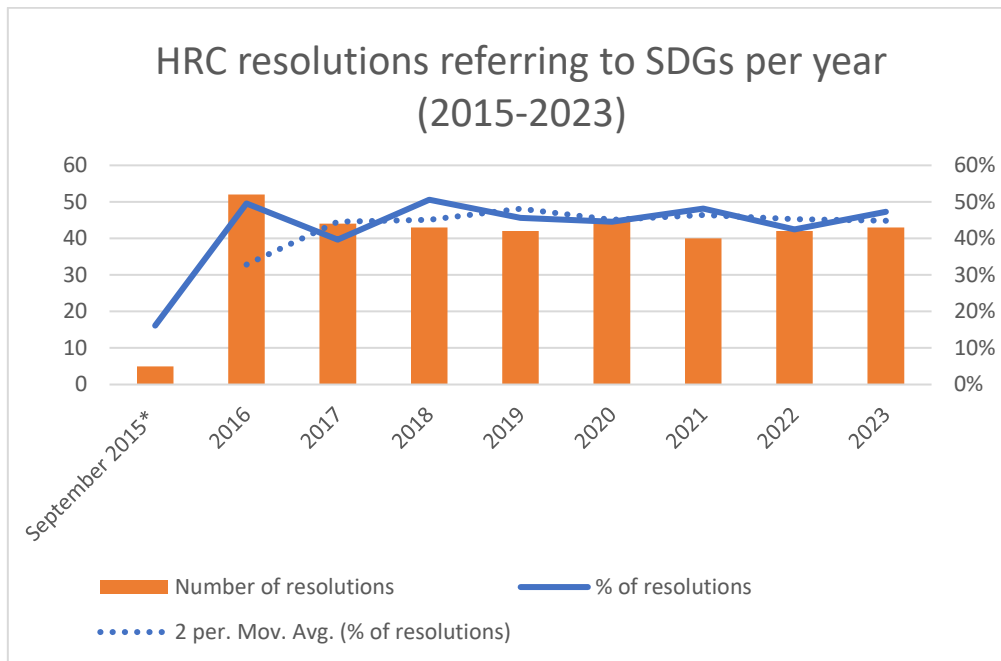
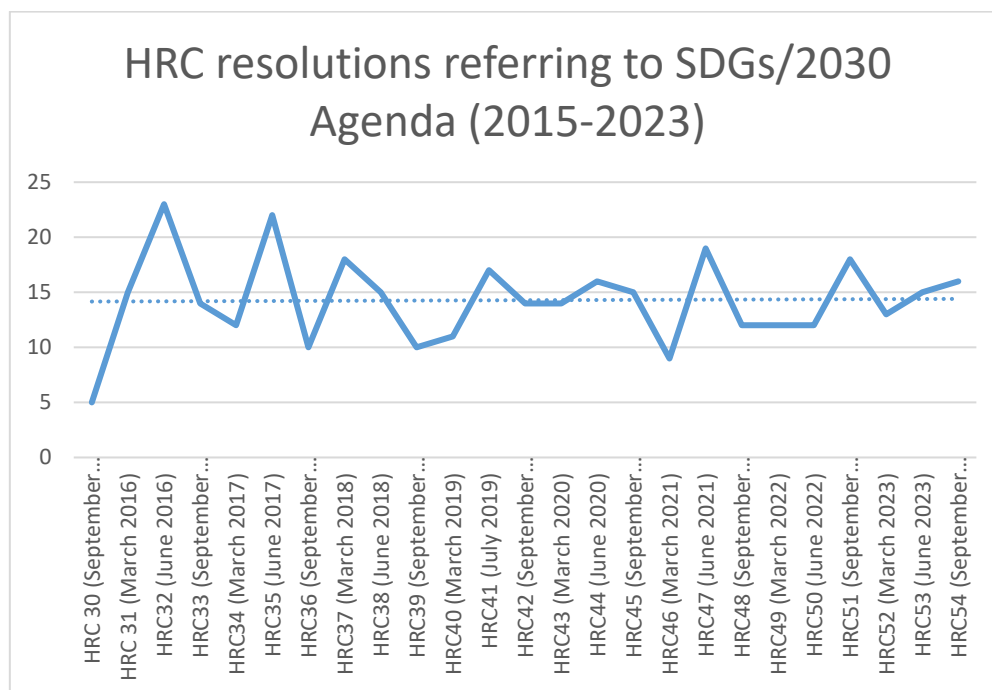


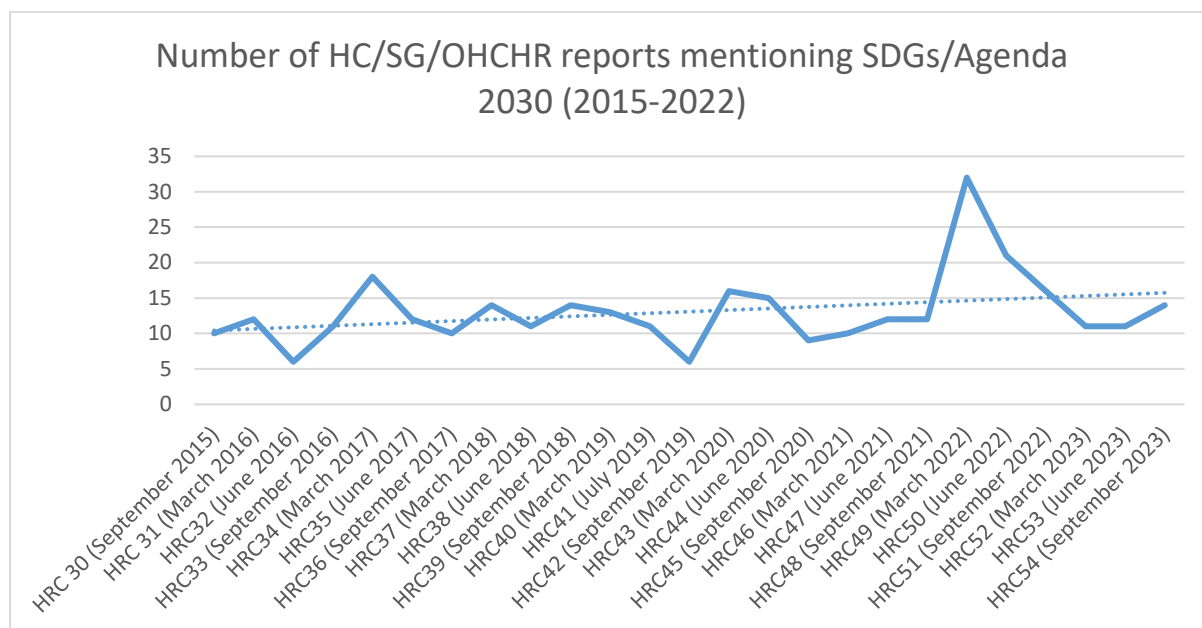
Figure 2. HRC resolutions referring to SDGs per Council session



### 2.3. Reports by the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Since 2015, a total of 327 Council reports that have referred to the 2030 Agenda and/or the SDGs, were prepared by the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, or the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. This represents 55% of the overall number of reports submitted by these actors. The trend suggests an increasing integration of the 2030 Agenda/SDGs in such Council reports. ([Figures 9](#)).

Figure 9. Number of HC/SG/OHCHR reports mentioning SDGs/Agenda 2030

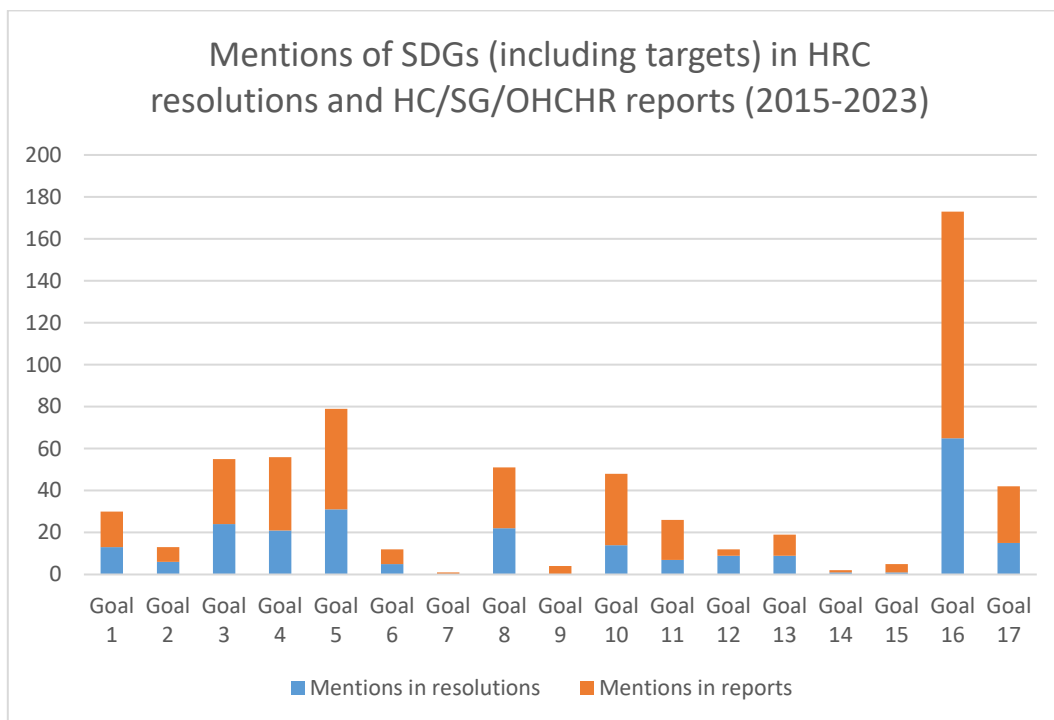


In 2023, at the Council’s 52<sup>nd</sup> session, OHCHR presented the report, “Summary of the fifth intersessional meeting for dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ” ([A/HRC/52/54](#)). The report contains a summary of the intersessional meeting held on 19 January 2023 in advance of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The previous intersessional meetings for dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda were held in January and December 2019, January 2021 and January 2022.

### 2.4. Top SDGs mentioned in resolutions and reports

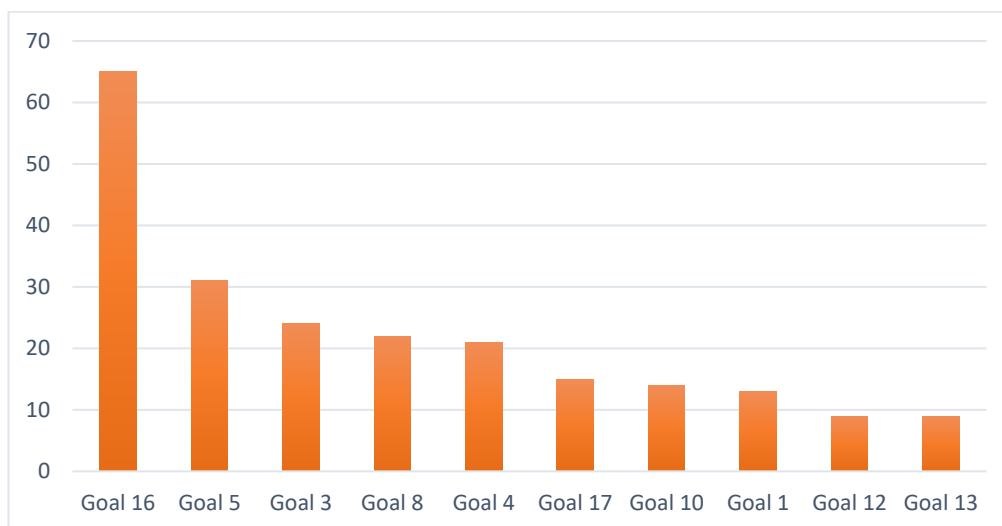
Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) is by far the most cited SDG, as seen in 74 resolutions and in 109 reports. Goal 5 (gender equality) is the second most cited SDG, seen in 29 resolutions and 39 reports ([Figure 5](#)).

Figure 5. Mentions of specific SDGs (including targets) in resolutions and HC/SG/OHCHR reports (2015-2022)



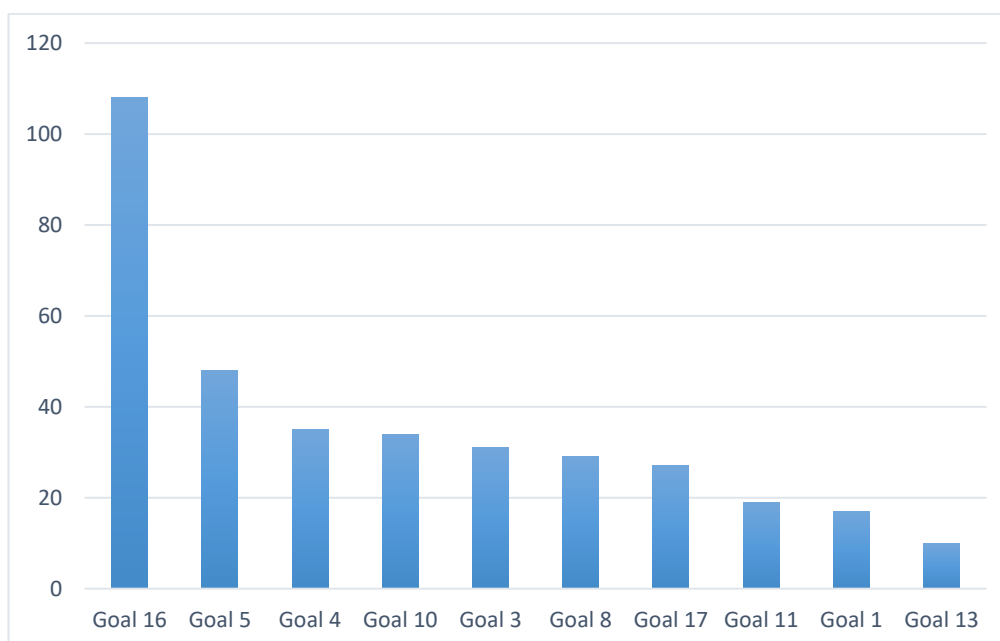
In resolutions, Goals 3, 8 and 4 are the next most cited SDGs (21-24 references). This is followed by Goals 17, 10 and 1 (13-15 references). Goals 7, 9, 14 and 15 have had minimal or no references in resolutions (0-1 references) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Top 10 SDGs (including their targets) mentioned in HRC resolutions



In reports, Goals 4 and 10 are cited 35 and 34 times respectively, while Goals 3, 8 and 17 are cited an average of 29 times. Goals 7 and 14 were only mentioned once in reports (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Top 10 SDGs (including their targets) mentioned in HC/SG/OHCHR reports



## 2.5. Council activities relating to the thematic focus of HLPF 2023

*“The HLPF in 2024 will review in-depth Goals: 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels; and Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.”*

Goals 1, 2, 16 and 17 have been more comprehensively cited within the work of the Council. In January 2024, the Council held its sixth intersessional meeting on human rights and the 2030 Agenda. The intersessional meeting based its discussions on the theme of the 2024 HLPF, in particular Goals 1, 16 and 17. A summary report of the meeting will be separately made available to the HLPF.

### A. Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

The Council adopted in 2023 a thematic resolution on ‘extreme poverty and Human rights’ [A/HRC/RES/53/10](#) Resolution adopted on July 12, 2023. This recent resolution reaffirms that widespread extreme poverty hinders the complete realization of human rights, emphasizing the urgent need to tackle poverty to safeguard human rights. The resolution underlines the importance of targets 1.1, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5.

Also in its resolution on “Promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights within the context of addressing inequalities” ([A/HRC/RES/54/22](#)). Goal 1 is highlighted in a



preambular paragraph by emphasizing the critical impact of extreme poverty on the full, equal, and effective enjoyment of human rights. The paragraph reaffirms the necessity to prioritize the immediate alleviation and eventual eradication of extreme poverty as a high priority for the international community. Furthermore, it stresses the importance of strengthening efforts towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1, which includes urgent measures to address homelessness.

In 2023, during its June session, the Council held its interactive dialogue with the special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, on the annual report that focused the employment guarantee as a tool in the fight against poverty ([A/HRC/53/33](#)).

In earlier sessions, Goal 1 was cited in the following OHCHR reports: on regional seminars on the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights ([A/HRC/54/43](#)), rights of the child and inclusive social protection ([A/HRC/54/36](#)), and on support systems to ensure community inclusion of persons with disabilities, including as a means of building forward better after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic ([A/HRC/52/52](#)).

***B. Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.***

The Council adopted, at its 52<sup>nd</sup> session, a thematic resolution on ‘The right to food’ ([A/HRC/52/16](#)). This resolution underscores the importance of ensuring access to an adequate and nutritious diet for all individuals, highlighting the fundamental nature of the right to food in promoting human dignity and well-being.

In 2022, during its March session, the Council held its annual Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to food. The Council considered the annual report of the mandate holder, which focused on Conflict and the right to food ([A/HRC/52/40](#)).

Goal 2 was cited in the High Commissioner report on rights of Indigenous Peoples ([A/HRC/54/39](#)) that underlines target 2.3.

***C. Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.***

In June 2023 the Council adopted its thematic resolution on “Human rights and climate change”, ([A/HRC/RES/53/6](#)). The resolution emphasizes the critical links between climate change and human rights. It also recognizes the adverse impacts of climate change on fundamental rights such as the right to life, health, food, water, and an adequate standard of living and stresses the urgent need for action to mitigate these risks and protect vulnerable populations, particularly in developing countries. Furthermore, the resolution establishes a connection with Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13) on climate action by encouraging Parties to the Paris Agreement to engage constructively in addressing loss and damage associated with climate change impacts.

The resolution also underscores the intersection of climate change and human rights, highlighting the need for immediate and concrete measures to address the adverse consequences of climate change on vulnerable populations and essential rights. By linking

these efforts with SDG 13, which focuses on urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, the resolution aims to promote a comprehensive approach to safeguarding human rights in the face of environmental challenges.

During the June session, the Council also held its annual Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change. The Council considered the report that focused on “Providing legal options to protect the human rights of persons displaced across international borders due to climate change” ([A/HRC/53/34](#)).

***D. Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.***

In 2023, the Council adopted its thematic resolution on “Promoting human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals through transparent, accountable and efficient public service delivery” (52/8). This resolution underscores the crucial link between human rights and the SDGs through effective public service delivery and emphasizes the importance of transparent, accountable, and efficient public services in advancing both human rights and the SDGs. In particular, this resolution aligns closely with SDG 16, which focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. By emphasizing transparent and accountable public service delivery, Resolution 52/8 contributes to the achievement of SDG 16 by promoting good governance practices, accountability mechanisms, and efficient public services that are essential for sustainable development and the protection of human rights.

The Council furthermore adopted its resolution on “The negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation” ([52/21](#)). This resolution underscores the significance of enhancing international cooperation to address this issue and its implications for human rights and underlines targets 16.4, 16.5, 16.6 and 16.10.

The Council’s resolution on “Human rights, democracy and the rule of law” ([52/22](#)) highlights the importance of upholding human rights, promoting democracy, and strengthening the rule of law to ensure a just and inclusive society. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in fostering peace, security, and sustainable development. It aligns with SDG 16 as it highlights the significance of enhancing access to justice, ensuring safety and security, and promoting human rights for sustainable development. By reflecting on the principles embedded in Goal 16, which focuses on building peaceful societies and providing access to justice while fostering effective institutions at all levels, this resolution underscores the essential role of transparent governance in advancing peace, justice, and inclusivity.

During its June session, the Council adopted a resolution on “Impact of arms transfers on human rights” ([53/15](#)), which highlights the adverse effects that arms transfers can have on

individuals' rights and emphasizes the importance of regulating and monitoring such transfers to protect human rights. This resolution is linked to targets 16.3, 16.4, 16.6 and 16.7.

Finally, SDG 16 was highlighted in Council resolution on “Advisory services and technical assistance for Cambodia” ([54/36](#)). It highlights the significant progress achieved by the Government of Cambodia in advancing the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals. Notably, 72.5% of Cambodian Goal indicators and sub-indicators are on track, demonstrating a strong commitment to further efforts to achieve the remaining Goals, including those outlined in Goal 16. This resolution underscores the importance of promoting peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, ensuring access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. By recognizing and supporting Cambodia's strides towards sustainable development and its dedication to fulfilling the targets and indicators of Goal 16, this resolution aligns with the broader global agenda of fostering peace, justice, and strong institutions for sustainable progress.

In 2023, SDG 16 was cited in the HC reports on: the impact of casualty recording on the promotion and protection of human rights ([A/HRC/53/48](#)), and implementation and enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights ([A/HRC/53/46](#)).

#### *E. Goal 17: Global partnership for sustainable development*

In June 2023, the Council adopted its resolution on “Enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights” ([54/28](#)), which reaffirmed the 2030 agenda and referred to SDG 17.

Goal 17 is also referred to in resolution on “Birth registration and the right of everyone to recognition everywhere as a person before the law” ([52/25](#)).

In September 2023, the Council held interactive dialogues with **the Special Rapporteur** on the right to development and with the **Expert Mechanism** on the Right to Development.

At the same session, the President of **the Economic and Social Council** briefed the Council on the 2023 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

In 2023, SDG 17 was cited in the following HC reports: summary of the fifth intersessional meeting for dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([A/HRC/52/54](#)), and improving technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights ([A/HRC/53/63](#)), which underlines target 17.2.

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