

UN expert urges Member States to adopt guidelines to reduce extreme poverty



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28 September 2012 – A United Nations independent expert today urged governments to embrace a set of guiding principles recently adopted by the UN Human Rights Council to reduce extreme poverty and protect the rights of vulnerable populations.

“The guiding principles seek to provide for the first time a global standard in the fight against extreme poverty, focusing on the rights of people living in poverty,” said the [Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty](#), Magdalena Sepúlveda, who drafted the guidelines on the basis of a decade of international consultations.

“This is a practical tool for policymakers which will guide States in designing their public policies, particularly their poverty eradication efforts, based on a human rights-based approach.”

Ms. Sepúlveda noted that the Council’s adoption of these principles represent an explicit recognition by States that the existence of extreme poverty is “an urgent human rights concern and a moral scandal.”

The adoption of the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights marks the end of a long process that began in 2001, when the then UN Human Rights Commission first proposed the elaboration of such guidelines. The principles provide guidance on the application of States’ human rights obligations in the fight against extreme poverty, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) said in a [news release](#).

The principles also highlight specific rights that are not enjoyed by persons living in poverty and points to State policies that are often inadequate or counterproductive in this respect.

“The adoption of these much-needed principles has indeed taken a long time, but it ends up being very opportune. These principles could play a key role protecting and empowering those who are hit hardest by the global economic crisis,” Ms. Sepúlveda said.

“Now I urge States to use these principles to strengthen their efforts to combat poverty, and civil society organizations to disseminate them and monitor their implementation widely. The guiding principles should assist in empowering people living in poverty to claim their rights, and ensuring that anti-poverty programmes reach those hardest to reach: the poorest of the poor.”

The guiding principles will be forwarded by the Human Rights Council to the General Assembly, OHCHR said.

Independent experts, or special rapporteurs, are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back, in an unpaid capacity, on specific human rights themes.

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