

# 2020 Annual Conference

## CONCEPT NOTE WORKING GROUP 4

**Building back better: How should regional and global human rights mechanisms address the human rights to health and housing?**

**Online event (Zoom), Thursday 15 October 2020,  
14:00 – 15:30**

Public investment in well-functioning health systems is key for countries to manage the COVID19 crisis. Aside of general availability and affordability of the health system, essential questions are non-discriminatory access to health care, services and information, and specific prevention and protection measures for at-risk groups. A human rights-based approach to health, i.e. the realization of the highest attainable standard of health, can guide states in the design of their health system and the provision of public health. The pandemic has exposed the failures of public health policies, and the delivery of health goods and services have, rightly, come increasingly under scrutiny.

The pandemic also made clear the importance of the social determinants of health and of the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights in shaping a holistic response to the crisis and the path to sustainable recovery programs that should address increased inequalities at all levels and strengthen the functioning of public protection systems.

Covid-19 has also exposed the clear link between health and housing. People and communities living in inadequate and insecure housing and living conditions (including high density and in precarious situations) have suffered disproportionately. Other related housing rights violations include people being evicted from their homes further exacerbating their housing and health conditions. As a result of 'lockdown' requirements, women's conditions have also worsened with a significant increase in domestic violence.

Relevant questions for this panel include the following: How do global and regional human rights mechanisms weigh into this debate? How have international and regional mechanisms responded to the Covid-19 situation? What is their role in monitoring States' obligations to realize the right to health and the right to housing, including through peer-review inter-governmental mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)? How can they link best to the National Human Rights Systems and national health and housing actors? How can they support rapid interventions in the health and housing crisis? How can they contribute to post-pandemic recovery programs to combat inequalities that were made evident during the crisis?

## PANELISTS

- **Alicia Ely Yamin**, Senior Fellow, Petrie-Flom Center for Health Law Policy, Biotechnology and Bioethics Harvard Law School and Senior Advisor on Human Rights, Partners in Health (tbc)
- **Robert Lewis-Lettington**, Chief of Section, Land, Housing and Shelter, Urban Practices Branch and Global Solutions Division, UN Habitat
- **Nathalie Laure Roebbel**, WHO Coordinator, Air Pollution and Health
- **Miloon Kothari**, Independent Expert on Human Rights and Social Policy, Former Special Rapporteur, UN Human Rights Council and GHRP Advisory Board Member

## MODERATOR

- **Virginia Bras-Gomes**, Senior Social Policy Adviser and Former Member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural and GHRP Advisory Board Member

## PARTNERS

[UN Habitat, Partners in Health](#) (tbc) [WHO](#) (tbc)