

Office of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights



United Nations
Development Programme

United Nations Sustainable
Development Group



Checklist for a **Human Rights-Based Approach** to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19



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I. Objective

In April 2020, the UN issued the [UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 \(SERF\)](#), which sets out the strategy and blueprint for the UN's urgent socio-economic response to countries and societies in the face of COVID-19. The SERF is a pathway designed to help countries tackle the devastating social and economic dimensions of the pandemic, with a focus on at-risk groups.¹ The SERF outlines that responses should aim to: protect people and planet; preserve gains across all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); ensure equality; promote transparency, accountability, participation, and collaboration; increase solidarity; and place the voice, rights and agency of people at the center.

The following checklist has been designed as a non-exhaustive list of potential actions, tools, and resources organized by the five streams of work that constitute the SERF.² Consistent with the UN Secretary-General's policy brief on [COVID-19 and Human Rights](#) the objective of the checklist is to provide initial guidance to help the UN in examining whether socio-economic impact assessments, responses, and recovery plans apply a human rights-based approach, ensuring that no one will be left behind.

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- 1 At-risk groups refers to populations experiencing the highest degree of socio-economic marginalization, requiring specific attention. See p. 5 of the [SERF](#)
 - 2 The checklist is informed by human rights guidance materials on COVID-19 produced by UN entities including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Organized according to this checklist's sections, the materials are featured in the non-exhaustive list of resources at the end of this document.

II.

Overview

The [SERF](#) requires UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to carry out the following actions as part of the implementation of the response:

1. Undertake a **mapping** of those most at risk of being left behind according to at-risk groups outlined in the framework³;
2. Make sure the UN's programmatic and non-programmatic interventions **address human rights concerns and advance human rights** and that **international norms, standards, and principles are integrated** in the design and implementation of socio-economic responses⁴;
3. Help countries establish or strengthen inclusive dialogue mechanisms between **civil society** and the state⁵;
4. Establish **transparent reporting mechanisms** and other means of verification of information related to the COVID-19 response for civil society (particularly those most marginalized)⁶;
5. Advise states on how to steer away from policies that could aggravate inequalities and human rights grievances for at-risk groups⁷ and keep the focus on '**building back better**' as outlined in the UN Secretary-General's [Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity](#) report⁸.

3 pp. 6-7 of the [SERF](#)

4 pp. 9, 34, 35 of the [SERF](#)

5 p. 35 of the [SERF](#)

6 p. 36 of the [SERF](#)

7 p. 34 of the [SERF](#)

8 p. 40 of the [SERF](#)

III.

Checklist



A. Mapping of Those Most at Risk of Being Left Behind

ACTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

		Yes	Not yet
1	Have you undertaken a quick but comprehensive mapping of the at-risk groups experiencing the highest degree of socio-economic marginalization and/or discrimination, requiring specific attention? ⁹ For additional checklists to guide considerations for some of the at-risk groups, use the links included below and reference the UNSDG COVID-19 Resources webpage that is updated on a regular basis with additional checklists.		

	Yes	N/A
Women [LINK TO SPECIFIC CHECKLIST]		
Older persons [LINK TO SPECIFIC CHECKLIST]		
Adolescents, children and youth, especially girls and young women		
Persons with disabilities, persons with mental health conditions [LINK TO SPECIFIC CHECKLIST]		
Indigenous peoples		
Migrants, refugees, stateless and internally displaced persons, conflict-affected populations		
Minorities		
Slum dwellers, people in informal		

	Yes	N/A
Small farmers, fishers, pastoralists, rural workers in informal and formal markets, and other people living in remote rural areas as well as urban informal sector and self-employed who depend on markets for food		
The food insecure, particularly in countries affected by prolonged conflict and crisis		
People in extreme poverty or facing insecure and informal work and incomes		
Groups that are particularly vulnerable and marginalized because laws, policies and practices do not protect them from discrimination and exclusion (e.g. LGBTI people)		

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