

Check against delivery



Statement by Ms. Alena Douhan

**SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF
UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES ON THE ENJOYMENT OF
HUMAN RIGHTS**

Biennial panel discussion

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Geneva



Honourable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to be here for the dialogue within the biennial panel discussion on the impact of unilateral sanctions and over-compliance on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

This event is all the more important in anticipation of SDG Summit, which will take place in New York next week to seek for ways to adapt the 2030 Agenda, as the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity and many other factors have posed serious challenges in the realisation of the SDGs and their specific targets, with reports indicating that less than one fifth of these targets being on track, while progress on 50% is weak and insufficient. In this context, I note that neither the agenda of the High-level Political Forum nor that of the SDG Summit include an assessment of the challenges caused by the use of unilateral sanctions and over-compliance in national and international efforts for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

My country visits, thematic work as well as information received from various sources on daily basis clearly indicate the detrimental impact of unilateral sanctions and over-compliance with them on the achievement of all and every single SDG, affecting therefore the right to development and well-being of all those living in targeted countries regardless of the types of unilateral sanctions imposed.

Even SDGs 2 and 3 (Zero hunger and Good health and well being) are severely affected despite the introduction of humanitarian carve-outs in different forms in sanctions regulations. There are numerous reports highlighting the challenges in acquiring authorisations and licences for procurement and delivery of essential goods , but also the impossibility to process payments for such goods, and to contract insurance for the cargoes, among others. Additional problems refer to the challenges to procure and deliver seeds, fertilizers, livestock vaccines, agricultural machinery and spare parts, diesel, unavailability of electricity, water for irrigation, equipment to process and store food.

Similar patterns are observed with regards to access to adequate healthcare, including medicines, vaccines, availability of medical equipment, software, rescue equipment, disease control and prevention, as well as access to medical information and opportunities for training of medical professionals. These elements not only undermine the achievement of SDG3 but they may also minimise the positive momentum around the ongoing global process towards an

international instrument to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

Adverse effects of unilateral sanctions and over-compliance on SDGs and their targets may emanate from narrow interpretations of humanitarian carve-outs which exclude development interventions in country under sanctions. These may refer to interventions of developmental nature, such as critical infrastructure development and maintenance, including energy and electricity, water and sanitation, transportation, education, industrial and environmental protection, emergency response mechanisms. It directly affects the achievement of SDGs 4, 6, 7, 9, 11–15.

Expanding unilateral sanctions combined with severing penalties for non-compliance with or circumvention of sanctions regimes exacerbate over-compliance leading to a complete disengagement with countries targeted by such measures, thus excluding whole populations from development, and intensifying inequalities at the global level affects people of countries under sanctions non-selectively resulting in their discrimination on the ground of nationality, place of residence or birth (SDG 10). All those in vulnerable situations are disproportionately affected, including women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and migrants (SDGs 3, 5, 8).

People affected face serious challenges even to access justice to protect their rights, to seek redress due to the absence of accountability mechanisms, unaffordability of legal assistance, complexity and vagueness of legal frameworks, pressures on legal professionals working on sanctions-related matters, all of which may counter the international commitments under SDG 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions.

Economic, financial and sectoral sanctions, sanctions against entities and businesses and additional over-compliance isolate countries under sanctions and their populations, closing the channels of international economic and other cooperation affecting poverty rates, putting strain on national social protection systems, descent work and economic growth (SDGs 1, 8, 12, 17).

Honourable Chair, your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As the Special Rapporteur I strongly believe that if we look for the solutions to enable the countries around the world to achieve SDGs, the abovementioned challenges should be taken into serious consideration: impact of unilateral sanctions shall not be ignored when discussing the achievement of SDGs alongside other challenges; assessment of the impact of unilateral sanctions shall

be done by all relevant UN entities and other international organisations, within the scope of their mandates; people from the countries under sanctions shall not be discriminated and deprived of their right to participate in, to contribute to, and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development.

I welcome therefore the panel discussion of the impact of unilateral sanctions and over-compliance on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, and I wish you a fruitful discussion.