What does the human rights (HRs) lens add to the post-2015 discussion? A rights-based approach to the post-2015 agenda recognizes the need to ensure that development cannot be narrowly defined as economic growth, but that it has to be consistent with human rights obligations. This puts additional emphasis on criteria that have not been fully integrated in the original MDGs agenda, such as inequalities, modes of participation, and access to justice.

Example: The consensus that Tunisia was on track to achieving the MDGs a few years ago suddenly fell apart as people rose up against inequality, the absence of participatory processes, unaccountable decision-making, and entrenched discrimination. The uprisings highlight indivisibility and interdependence between civil and political rights (CPRs) and economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs).

Who should be accountable for what? Governments have the primary responsibility to fulfill HRs and to ensure there is redress and remedy for people whose rights have been violated, particularly discriminated groups. They need to offer guarantees of a minimum social floor and minimum core obligations in economic and social rights per international treaties such as the ICESCR, the CRPD, and CEDAW.

We also need to focus on the accountability of the private sector for its impact on HRs. There is already a normative framework for that, which are the UN guiding principles on business and human rights.

How could the international HR system strengthen accountability post-2015? Development plans and related legislation must be linked to the international HR framework which is binding for both governments and donors. The framework is based on a set of monitoring and reporting mechanisms which are carried out by the Human Rights Council (HRC) and its Special Procedures (SPs) as well as Treaty Bodies (TBs).
Additional accountability measures must be taken at the national level, for example to reinforce the monitoring role of National HR Institutions (NHRIs) and national statistical institutions, to strengthen the justifiability of ESCRs, to open up national and local budgets for public scrutiny, and to promote access to justice for the poor.

- **What lessons have been learned from the UPR so far?** UPR is a peer assessment of HR situation on the ground and fulfilment of state obligations conducted every 4 years. It is a participatory process which involves member states as well as civil society actors. The first cycle (2008-2011) highlighted HRs as a universal concern and an area for dialogue and cooperation. Second cycle (2012-2016) has focused on implementation of accepted recommendations as well as new developments. Here States are expected to report on actions taken but monitoring role of civil society is critical, and there must be an enabling environment for that role to be fulfilled.

- **What about the UPRs of Arab States?** The first UPR cycle highlighted several capacity gaps in national HR systems in the region; the most important ones are: (1) absence of systematic measurement of progress in the realization of ESCRs; (2) insufficient accountability and redress mechanism for HR violations due to weak NHRIs and judicial systems; (3) lack of coordination between government institutions to implement and report on HR policies; (4) little budget transparency and insufficient engagement with civil society in the design of development policies; (5) need to set up a better environment for rights holders to claim their rights, particularly women and group risking discrimination.

- **Tunisia UPR example:** As per the rest of the Arab States, most of the peer States' recommendations made to Tunisia were on civil & political rights (on a total of 113 made), however a few ones (17) were made on ESCR: calling for a more balanced socio-economic (health & education) development between the different regions of the country, for an increased fight against unemployment & poverty, for protection & social security for all, especially for the most vulnerable and the rural populations. Some recommendations were also made on one hand on rural women's access to ESCR, and on another hand on inclusive education for the disabled. Of the 17 social-economic recommendations made to Tunisia, none was rejected and only one was deemed to be further considered: the recommendation (made by Spain) to ratify the additional protocol to the International Covenant on ESCR that enables individuals and groups to file complaints to the Committee. In order to strengthen the accountability and ensure realization of the Tunisian commitments, the Tunisian government has decided so far to produce a UPR mid-progress report according to
which most of the ESCR recommendations are being implemented. Following the OHCHR’s Tunisia country office advocacy efforts, the government has also decided the establishment of a permanent national mechanism specifically in charge of following-up the implementation of the recommendations and of timely submitting the various periodic reports. To enhance a focus and accountability, it would be appropriate to support this mechanism on how to link the HR recommendations with the post-2015 development agenda and objectives.

- **How can this inform post-2015 development agenda in MENA?** Government have to (1) create conditions for the active engagement by civil society in decision-making. For example, in Yemen, Water User Associations use community-based water management to define community priorities and enhance citizen participation in decision making. In Egypt a pilot Community Score Card process was launched last year to help citizens monitor school performance (2) Disclose information on budgets and development plans and implement laws that enable civil society to access that information. For example, citizen budgets were developed in Tunisia and Morocco in the past couple of years with the support of civil society watchdogs. (3) Actively engage with UN HRs mechanisms through regular reporting to the UPR and to Treaty Bodies on progress made, particularly with respect to ESCRs. Use disaggregated data and HR indicators to measure progress and to identify groups that risk being left out.

- In conclusion, the UPR as an accountability mechanism and its recommendations should be considered not in isolation but in conjunction with other HR mechanisms such as Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council as well as Treaty Bodies and should benefit from the strong engagement of both States and civil society.