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UN Human Rights Council resolution affirms the importance of investing in public services for the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights

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Eight international civil society organisations welcome a [resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council](#) adopted by consensus on 23 March 2021 affirming the crucial importance of investment in public services for the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights.

The resolution, which was adopted by all 47 member States, recognises “*that persistent and growing inequalities and underinvestment in public services within countries are major challenges to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, affecting particularly those living in poverty and in vulnerable situations*” and recalls in this regard “*State obligations related to non-discrimination and promoting equality*” (para. 17). This resolution adds to a [growing body of statements](#) recognising that the provision of public services is a human rights requirement, and to a number of reports highlighting the dangers of the commercialisation and financialisation of these services.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which is likely to be the first in a series of global shocks related to the ecological breakdown, has highlighted the unsustainability of market-driven systems to deliver on human rights and ensure access for all, and has underscored the vital importance of universal quality, transparent, gender-responsive, participatory and democratically governed public services.

This resolution is a welcome reaffirmation of the crucial need for States to adequately fund public services such as water, education and health, to the maximum of their available resources, and without retrogression, in order to address rising inequalities, within and between countries, and guarantee the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights for all, without discrimination. This requires systemic reform of the global economic and debt

architecture, including democratising global economic governance and re-aligning macroeconomic policies to ensure appropriate fiscal space to fund public services.

The signing organisations are committed to continue working together to challenge the commercialisation and financialisation of public services and to mobilise for strong, universal and sustainably financed public services that ensure the realisation of human rights for all. This builds on a [unique event](#) organised in October 2020, where eight current and former UN human rights experts shared their concerns about the growing commercialisation of public services and the need to reaffirm human right obligations regarding public services.

Signatories:

- ActionAid
- East African Centre for Human Rights (EACHRights)
- Eurodad
- Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR)
- Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER)
- Public Services International (PSI)
- Society for International Development (SID)
- Transnational Institute (TNI)