

# Glossary

## Health and Human Rights

2017

### Civil and Political Rights

Human rights concerning individual autonomy and participation in government, defined in international law by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other treaties; for example, the right to life, equality before the law, and freedom of expression.

### Claims and Duties

Claims and duties: Terms used in human rights law commonly used to refer to the legal demands (claims) or responsibilities and rights (duties) between persons under the law. (adapted from Oxford Dictionary online)

### Colonialism

Colonialism: The policy or practice of one country's political control over another country, including occupation and economics. Colonialism is traditionally associated in human rights discussions with the imposition of human rights violations that manifest discrimination and inequities that negatively affect the health and health risks of those who are being colonized. (adapted and expanded from the Oxford Dictionary online)

### Conditions

The circumstances or factors that affect the way in which people live or work, especially with regard to their well-being. Conditions pertinent to health and human rights include both health conditions (factors such as disease that affects the body directly), and conditions for health (social, environmental, or political factors that can affect health and health risks). (adapted and expanded from the Oxford Dictionary online)

### Dignity

A core philosophical and ethical concept in human rights law, related to the inherent value of a human being as worthy of merit and respect. (adapted from Oxford English Dictionary)

### Economic, Social, and Cultural (ESC) Rights

A group of human rights concerning the workplace, social security, family life, cultural life, and access to an adequate standard of living, among other things, defined in international law by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other treaties; for example, the right to health, housing, and education.

### Equity in Health

(i) The absence of systematic or potentially remediable differences in health status, access to healthcare and health-enhancing environments, and treatment in one or more aspects of health across populations or population groups defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically within and across countries. (ii) A measure of the degree to which health policies are able to distribute well-being fairly. (Health Systems Strengthening Glossary, World Health Organization 2011)

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# Glossary: Health and Human Rights

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## Health

A state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (Constitution of the World Health Organization 1946)

## Health Policy

(i) A formal statement or procedure within institutions (notably government), which defines priorities and the parameters for action in response to health needs, available resources and other political pressures. (Health Promotion Glossary) (ii) A statement designed specifically to promote health or a desired health outcome, or those not explicitly about health but acknowledged to have a health impact (e.g., education, transportation, and economic policy). (Kaiser Family Foundation 2015)

## Health System

(i) All the activities whose primary purpose is to promote, restore and/or maintain health; (ii) the people, institutions and resources, arranged together in accordance with established policies, to improve the health of the population they serve, while responding to people's legitimate expectations and protecting them against the cost of ill-health through a variety of activities whose primary intent is to improve health. (Health Systems Strengthening Glossary, World Health Organization 2011)

## Human Rights

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights)

As they relate to health and human rights violations, they may be discussed in several different conceptual frameworks, as legal, ethical, and/or moral principles.

## Human Rights-Based Approaches (HRBAs) to Health

Attitudes, policies, and practices that shape organizational and individual action, commonly discussed in the context of health, health systems, and economic development with health implications; HRBAs may take different forms but share a rooted commitment to key human rights principles, such as: universality, interdependence and indivisibility, equality and nondiscrimination, transparency and accountability, and meaningful participation. (Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University)

## Inextricable Linkage

The idea advanced by Dr. Jonathan Mann in 1994, that there is an inseparable relationship between health and human rights such that no person can fully enjoy health without human rights, nor can any person fully enjoy human rights without health. (derived from Yamin video narrative)

## International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

A conference coordinated by the United Nations in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994 during which 20,000 delegates from governments, UN agencies, NGOs, and the media discussed issues including immigration, infant mortality, birth control, family planning, education of women, and protection for women from unsafe abortion services. The Program of Action that resulted from the conference is the steering document for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

### **Legally-Enforceable Right**

Sometimes referred to as “judicialization,” human rights law focuses primarily on rights that can be enacted through the due process of the courts and enforced by law. (derived from Yamin video narrative)

### **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

Eight international goals established to measure the achievement of the Millennium Declaration with a target date of achievement of 2015. The goals are as follows: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development.

### **Sexual and Reproductive Health**

Refers to a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes at all stages of life. (Global Health Glossary) According to the World Health Organization, achieving good reproductive health requires attention to: sexual development, maturation, and health with special reference to adolescents; fertility regulation (i.e., family planning); maternal health; perinatal health; unsafe abortion; infertility; reproductive tract infections, including HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted infections, and cervical cancer; violence and its consequences for sexual and reproductive health; and female genital mutilation and other harmful practices. (Health, Public Health & Global Health: Concepts and Contemporary Landscape, Goldie SJ 2017)

### **Social Determinants of Health**

“The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems.” (World Health Organization)

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

International development goals that succeeded the Millennium Development Goals after 2015. The term emerged from an agreement made at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 (Rio+20).

### **State**

In human rights documents, the capitalized term, “State,” commonly refers to individual countries or nations, most typically those 193 nations that hold formal membership in the United Nations.

### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Promulgated by the UN General Assembly in 1948, following World War II and the creation of the United Nations, this document set forth a standard of fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

### **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**

The goal of universal health coverage is to ensure that all people obtain the health services they need without suffering financial hardship when paying for them. This requires: a strong, efficient, well-run health system; a system for financing health services; access to essential medicines and technologies; and a sufficient capacity of well-trained, motivated health workers. (Health in All Policies Glossary, World Health Organization 2017)

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### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

The United Nations specialized agency for health. WHO's objective, as set out in its Constitution, is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Health is defined in WHO's Constitution as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. WHO is governed by 192 Member States through the World Health Assembly. (Kaiser Family Foundation 2015)