

UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON EXTREME POVERTY & HUMAN RIGHTS

UNITED STATES COUNTRY VISIT – DECEMBER 1-15, 2017

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE U.N. SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON EXTREME POVERTY

The official visit to the United States by the U.N. Special Rapporteur (SR) on extreme poverty and human rights, Professor Philip Alston, represents a significant opportunity (1) to **attract attention** to the causes and effects of poverty in the United States, (2) **to foster dialogues** with local, state, and national decision-makers, and (3) **to strengthen coalitions** to advance human rights. The SR has a **unique platform** to address a broad range of audiences. Sharing information with him can help bring media and government attention to an issue, as well as an international spotlight. Yet, there are **limits** to what the SR can do. It is important not to expect too much and to think strategically about **how to have an impact**—not just on the SR’s press statement, final report, and interactions with media and government officials—but also on ongoing advocacy efforts here in the U.S. to address the human rights impacts of poverty.

Below are some **tips** for engaging with the Special Rapporteur, in conversations and in written correspondence.

1. **Think strategically about what you would like the SR to say.** Consider what messages you would like to see about particular issues, and then ensure your contribution equips the SR to make the statement you want. Include enough details and references to additional materials to enable the SR to speak about the matter, and direct the SR’s attention to specific areas needing greater attention or improvement. What difficult messages need to be said publicly and heard by powerful actors?
2. **Try to be specific, clear, and mindful of time.** The SR receives many submissions on a variety of topics. Having a clear, concise idea of your message increases the chances of impacting the SR and ensures that others have time to share their message, too.
3. **Link your issue to human rights.** Be prepared to explain why the issue you raise is a human rights issue.
4. **Look for connections between your issues and the SR’s priority areas for this visit.** Those include: criminal justice; voting rights and political participation; homelessness; social protection, including health care, housing, water, and sanitation; and the impact of new technologies in the welfare and criminal justice systems. The link between civil and political disenfranchisement of the poor and the denial of economic, social, and cultural rights is also a focus.
5. **Offer proposals for positive change.** Suggest concrete measures and solutions or principles to guide changes in law, policy or practice..
6. **Help the SR ask the right questions.** Provide specific questions that the SR can raise with local, state, or federal government officials and/or pose publicly to the media and international officials.
7. **Ask questions of the SR.** Don’t hesitate to ask about the SR’s role, potential impact, and what follow up to expect.
8. **Think ahead about next steps.** How can the SR’s statements or report reinforce your messages and strengthen your advocacy efforts? How you might use any statements that the SR makes? How might you respond if the SR does not raise or adequately address key issues?
9. **Take notes and spread the word.** Document your interaction with the SR, reach out to your media contacts, and publicize on social media.
10. **Build connections. Give the SR team contact information for follow-up.**

For further information on the U.N. Special Rapporteur’s visit to the US and how you can get involved:
www.ushrnetwork.org/srextremepoverty & www.ohchr.org/en/issues/poverty

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INFO



VISIT ushrnetwork.org/srextremepoverty & ohchr.org/en/issues/poverty



EMAIL QUESTIONS TO THE SR srextremepoverty@ohchr.org



SUBMIT WRITTEN STATEMENTS TO THE SR srextremepoverty@ohchr.org

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