



## TRANSCRIPT

Source: [Louv201x] Human Rights Indicators

Of course, one important debate has been about how to measure the progress made by states in the realization of human rights. Which are the indicators that should be used in order to measure such progress? And, in time, a consensus has been gradually developed around the idea that indicators in human rights should fall in three categories, and that we needed three types of measures to measure progress.

First, we have what is called structural indicators. Structural indicators try to measure essentially the goodwill of the state, what the state has shown in terms of willingness to make progress, for example, by the adoption of certain legislations, by the ratification of certain international instruments, by accepting some procedures of individual communications before human rights bodies, or by the adoption of a particular action plan that defines the intentions of the state to move towards the fulfillment of human rights. These structural indicators really measure the good intentions of the state by examining the legal, institutional framework that the State has put in place in order to make progress in the realization of human rights. But of course, intentions, though important, are not sufficient.

A second type of indicators are process indicators that serve to measure the importance of the efforts made by the state in moving towards the realization of human rights. Process indicators will examine, for example, the budgetary commitments of the state to fulfill the right to food, the right to housing, the right to health or to education. Process indicators will examine the percentage of the budget going to policies that focus on social priorities. The number of complaints that are filed by individuals, that is a way to measure whether the information they have about their rights is adequate, or process indicators may concern the nature of the policies that are in place and the importance of the investment made. That, however, still is not sufficient, because it is all fine and well for states to have the right institutional framework and legislative framework, to have the right policies in place, and to put money into the financing of these

policies, but if the results do not follow, it means that the policies are not well designed, and maybe they have to be rethought and improved.

So a third set of indicators are outcome indicators, outcome indicators that look very much like classic development indicators, such as those that are used by the United Nations Development Program, for example, in the annual human development reports that it presents. Outcome indicators measure the results. They measure, for example, the percentage of girls and boys that have access to secondary education. They measure the number of people or the proportion of the population that is vaccinated against certain diseases. Measures, for example, the level of undernourishment or malnutrition rates in the country.

And by having these outcome indicators, together with the process and structural indicators, we can see the realization of human rights as a permanent learning process in which misguided policies, policies that are not successful in achieving results, shall be reexamined, revised, improved by this permanent feedback that the indicators provide as to the success of policies that are implemented. So these indicators serve essentially not just to learn and to improve, but also to distinguish what the state is responsible for and what are the external constraints that the state is unable to overcome.

If the process indicators, for example, and the structural indicators are very positive, but the outcomes are very poor, then maybe it is because, despite all the efforts that the state puts into certain policies, into the realization of human rights, there are constraints that the state faces that make it difficult for the state to achieve certain results. Maybe the state should be better supported by the international community. Maybe there is a need to improve the international environment in which the state operates. Or maybe the policies are misguided, in which case, we shall have to demand that the state change its policies to achieve better results.

So these indicators are complementary. Neither structural, nor process, nor outcome indicators are sufficient per se. It is their combination that is interesting and allows us to screen the unwillingness from the state to make progress, or distinguish the unwillingness from the state to make progress from its inability to do so because of the lack of capacity and the constraints that the state faces.