



Permanent Mission of Finland
Mission permanente de la Finlande,
Genève
Geneva

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VERBAL NOTE

The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has the honour to submit the attached response by the Government of Finland to the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, with reference to the joint communication on 26 November 2025 (AL FIN 1/2025).

The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurance of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 21st of January 2026



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Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Communication sent by the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights

Response by the Government of Finland

21 January 2026

With reference to the joint communication of 26 November 2025 (AL FIN 1/2025) by the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, the Government of Finland submits the following response.

Finland appreciates the work of UN Human Rights Council's Special Procedures and values their independence.

Finland is a long-standing advocate of economic, social and cultural rights. Finland is active in promoting economic, social and cultural rights at international human rights fora, for example rights to education, rights to water and sanitation, sexual and reproductive rights, and the right to housing. Finland pays special attention to ensuring gender equality, non-discrimination and the rights of persons in vulnerable situations.

The first section of the Constitution of Finland provides that Finland participates in international co-operation for the protection of peace and human rights and for the development of society. With regard to the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the Constitution of Finland includes a specific provision on responsibility for the environment, which also recognizes the fundamental right to a healthy environment.

The Finnish Government is strongly committed to supporting human rights, democracy, rule of law as well as implementation of Agenda 2030 and climate agreements. Cross-cutting objectives, such as gender equality and non-discrimination as well as a human rights-based approach, will continue to be integrated in all development actions funded by Finland. In the human rights based approach to development, Finland emphasizes the interdependence of civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights. The 2024 Government reports on Finnish foreign and security policy and international economic relations and development cooperation¹ clearly reflect these commitments.

International cooperation and official development assistance can play an important, catalyzing role in complimenting national efforts towards sustainable development. The EU and its Member States remain the world's largest official development assistance donor and a reliable partner. However, the primary responsibility for the protection, respect and fulfilment of human rights always lies with the State itself. Economic crisis, poverty and financing pressures can impede sustainable development, but economic circumstances should not be brought up by States to evade their responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil the civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights of its population. Rule of law and democracy are important in the realization of both civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights.

Finland's objective is to build long-term, sustainable, equal partnerships with developing countries based on mutual benefit and respect. Finland will continue bilateral and multilateral cooperation through a wide and diverse range of cooperation forms and instruments based on mutual strategic interests. Cooperation aims at unlocking local potential for inclusive and sustainable development, delivering benefits for both. Finland strives to link trade and development and supports our partners in creating sustainable investments to increase economic independence. Domestic resource mobilization and mobilizing private capital are essential in this regard. Finland also underlines the role of civil society, rights of women and girls, education, climate and digitalization in its development policy.

As stated in the current government programme, civil society organizations play an important role in helping Finland achieve its development cooperation objectives. Civil society plays an essential role in promoting human rights, democracy, and rule of law. The Finnish Government has placed strong emphasis on the role of civil society; about one sixth of Finnish Development Cooperation budget is channeled through civil society organizations. At the same time, Finland expresses deep concern on the shrinking civic space and the attacks on human rights defenders around the world.

According to the current government programme, the level of Finland's development funding is adjusted in accordance with Finland's economic situation. Finland has historically committed to allocating 0.7% of its GNI to development funding in accordance with the UN Recommendation. However, as part of austerity measures in the Finnish economy, cuts also in the development cooperation budget have been a necessity. The cuts will take into consideration commitments that have already been made.

Armed conflicts around the world are hindering sustainable development and in addition, draining the resources needed for it. Finland is unfortunately no exception. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is forcing us to reallocate resources to safeguarding our security and national existence. Due to our history and geographic location, Finland has always put high emphasis on national defense while implementing its international obligations and commitments.

Russia's military aggression also threatens global security and stability, violates the UN Charter and its far-reaching consequences set back global efforts on sustainable development. In addition, this humanitarian crisis in Europe is guiding our humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. Finland's support to Ukraine, its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity is unwavering.

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ⁱ <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/6fd3dcd6-b479-40a1-bb5c-63953a15d4b6/content>
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