



OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SPECIAL PROCEDURES OF
THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

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TO WHOM IT MIGHT CONCERN

Participation is a human right in itself and a key means of realizing all other human rights. As United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, a core part of my mandate has been examining to what extent people living in poverty are able to enjoy their right to equal participation in public life. During my mission to Ireland in 2011, I visited the Fatima Mansions regeneration project in Dublin. I praised this in my subsequent report to the Human Rights Council as a "good example of community participation in the decision-making process that should be ensured in other projects".

I applaud the great work of the Ballinacurra Weston Residents' Alliance (BWRA) in working with disadvantaged communities to promote their agency, rights and voice, and I support their approach to community participation. I believe they have legitimate concerns about the limited extent to which residents have been able to participate in decision-making around regeneration and I therefore urge the relevant authorities in the Limerick regeneration areas to take their recommendations, based on human rights, into consideration. Tokenistic or formulaic participation is not empowering or rights-compliant. In order for people living in poverty to have their dignity upheld, they must be able to have a real say in decisions that affect their lives. As the BWRA has said, "Safe and sustainable communities can only be delivered through real and meaningful community participation and partnership"; and moreover, I would add that this is a matter of fundamental justice from the human rights perspective.



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United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

For more information

Report Mission to Ireland is available here:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/CountryVisits.aspx>

Report on participation of people living in poverty in decisions that affect their lives is available here:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>