

**Submission to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**  
[Call for Input: Human Rights Council resolution 52/8 on Promoting Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals through transparent, accountable and efficient public service delivery](#)

*By Lostisland*

**Q1:** The main challenges pertaining to public service delivery revolve around a combination of institutional and practical barriers. On the institutional front, a lack of transparency and accountability within government agencies often hampers efficient service provision, leading to citizen frustration. Bureaucratic red tape, corruption, and a dearth of effective oversight mechanisms exacerbate these issues. Furthermore, uneven resource distribution and disparities in service quality between urban and rural areas underscore systemic inequalities. On the practical side, an outdated infrastructure, inadequate training for public servants, and a digital divide limit the ability to provide timely and accessible services to all citizens. These multifaceted challenges not only impede progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals but also undermine the fundamental human right to access essential public services, necessitating a comprehensive and concerted effort to address them.

**Q2:** Governments can overcome challenges to the provision of public services by increasing social spending, addressing structural discrimination, maximizing available resources, preventing corruption, and reallocating public expenditure. For example in India, the government launched the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005, which provides a legal guarantee of 100 days of work per year to all rural households. The NREGA has been credited with reducing poverty and hunger in rural India, as well as increasing access to public services such as education and healthcare.

In addition, governments can also overcome challenges to the provision of public services by engaging with citizens and communities and using technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness. In Estonia, the government has implemented a nationwide e-government system, which allows citizens to access a wide range of public services online. The e-government system has helped to reduce waiting times for public services and improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery. By implementing these and other good practices and approaches, governments can ensure that all citizens have access to the essential services they need.

**Q3:** Corruption plays a substantial role in excluding individuals and households from accessing public services, contributing to a deeply entrenched cycle of inequality and injustice. Corruption profoundly hinders the equitable delivery of public services to various population groups. When public officials demand bribes or embezzle public funds meant for service delivery, marginalized communities and vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected, as they often lack the resources or connections to navigate corrupt systems. Corruption diverts resources away from essential services like healthcare, education, and social welfare, leading to substandard facilities and inadequate resources in areas with high corruption rates. Moreover, it erodes trust in government institutions and diminishes citizens' confidence in the state's ability to provide essential services, further marginalizing those in need. Transparency, accountability, and efficient public service delivery are critical not only for realizing human rights but also for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and addressing corruption is paramount to ensuring equal access to

public services for all.

**Q5:** The challenges and good practices in public service delivery to vulnerable and marginalized groups encompass a complex landscape. On one hand, challenges persist due to systemic discrimination, lack of access to quality services, and insensitivity to diverse needs. Vulnerable groups such as persons living in poverty face barriers of affordability and social exclusion, while women and girls grapple with gender-based discrimination and violence. Children and youth often encounter educational disparities and lack of targeted support. Ethnic, national, and linguistic minorities face cultural insensitivity and inadequate language services, and persons with disabilities confront physical and attitudinal barriers. Indigenous peoples experience dispossession and violation of their rights, migrants endure xenophobia and lack of legal protection, and older persons confront ageism and inadequate healthcare. On the other hand, good practices include inclusive policies, data-driven decision-making, and capacity building that can help bridge these gaps. Empowering vulnerable groups through targeted initiatives, tailored education, and healthcare programs can enhance their access to public services. Community engagement, cultural competence, and linguistic inclusivity contribute to more effective service delivery. Furthermore, recognizing and upholding the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants, along with adopting a rights-based approach for older persons, are essential components of promoting transparent, accountable, and efficient public service delivery in alignment with Human Rights Council Resolution 52/8. This approach ensures that no one is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development, thereby advancing the overarching goals of human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Q7:** The participation of private actors in public service delivery is primarily regulated and monitored through a combination of legislative frameworks, regulatory authorities, and oversight mechanisms. Private sector involvement in public service delivery is governed by a set of laws and regulations that define the terms and conditions of engagement, contractual obligations, and performance standards. These regulations often aim to strike a balance between fostering efficiency and innovation while safeguarding the public interest. Additionally, there are regulatory bodies or agencies tasked with supervising and monitoring the activities of private actors in the public service domain. They play a pivotal role in ensuring compliance with established rules, standards, and codes of conduct. Moreover, these regulatory bodies engage in continuous assessment and evaluation of private sector participation, which includes periodic audits and reviews to ascertain adherence to agreed-upon terms and the delivery of quality services.

However, despite these regulatory efforts, challenges persist in effectively monitoring and regulating private sector involvement in public service delivery. One significant challenge is ensuring transparency and accountability in the privatization of essential services. Maintaining a balance between the profit motive of private companies and the public's right to access affordable, high-quality services remains a delicate task. Ensuring that private actors uphold human rights principles and sustainable development goals can be a considerable challenge, as profit-maximization may sometimes lead to cost-cutting measures that compromise service quality. Furthermore, challenges may arise from a lack of capacity within regulatory bodies or shortcomings in their independence, which can hinder their ability to effectively oversee private sector entities. To address these issues, it is essential to build strong oversight institutions, ensure comprehensive reporting and

transparency requirements, and promote stakeholder engagement and civil society participation in the monitoring process. Successful practices often involve creating robust partnership agreements, establishing clear performance metrics, and fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors to achieve shared goals and maximize the benefits of private sector involvement in public service delivery while safeguarding human rights and sustainable development.

***N/B:*** Lostisland.org is an international organisation, with no specific focus country. The answers provided are based on the global context.