

Manfred Nowak: Abstract

Panel: Advancing Human Rights or “Shaping the World as You Want it” with a focus on “Why Human Rights must NOT be subordinated to State or National Interests?”

I would start with 75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 30 years of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, which was held at a time of a window of opportunity after the end of the Cold War to create a new world order based upon human rights, democracy and the rule of law. However, this window of opportunity was not used as neoliberalism has become the main driving force of globalization which led to privatization, deregulation (also of global financial markets) and minimization of the role of States in favor of private markets. This weakened the power of States to protect and fulfil human rights and increased the power of non-State actors, above all transnational corporations, private military and security companies, organized crime, armed groups and terrorist organizations. The emergence of human trafficking as a worldwide phenomenon of transnational organized crime is part of this dynamic and illustrates very well the weakness of States and criminal law agencies to effectively combat this horrible crime which subjects millions of women, children and men to slavery-like dependence.