Robust data is central for conducting stakeholder consultations. Appropriate quantitative data in the form of statistics, indicators and/or indices is needed to undertake a situation analysis, gain insight into the risks stakeholders will confront, monitor compliance with agreements made, and monitor progress or regress along dimensions of concern to different stakeholders. Without such data, opinions and anecdotal information dominate discussions rather than fact based analysis.

The Social and Economic Rights Fulfillment Index (SERF Index) and its component Right Indices offer a unique tool for assessing human wellbeing key aspects of stakeholder risk worldwide and monitoring agreements. Income based indicators, such as per capita GDP, tell you something about the potential level of wellbeing all people in a country could enjoy if income were equally distributed—but income isn’t equally distributed. Socio-economic indicators and indices such as infant mortality rates and school enrollment rates and the Human Development Index only tell you the extent to which people in a country enjoy the corresponding aspect of well-being. They don’t tell you whether the country is doing as much as it could to advance wellbeing within the constraints of its resource capacity. The SERF Index is grounded in international law and assesses country performance in fulfilling the essential substantive economic and social rights—the rights to food, health, education, housing, work, and social security—the 170 countries ratifying the International Covenant for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) have concurred are essential to human dignity and wellbeing. The SERF Index was created through a 3 year collaborative process by Susan Randolph, Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and Terra Lawson-Remer.

The SERF Index and its underlying component Right Indices:
- Are the only indices of socio-economic wellbeing that assess a country’s achievement relative to what it is feasible to achieve given the country’s resources capacity.
- Use an evidence based approach to benchmark what is feasible for countries to achieve at each given per capita income level.
- Make possible objective assessment of whether the overall situation in a country is improving or deteriorating.
- Is comparable across countries and over time.
- Uses objective, internationally comparable, publically accessible statistical data.
- Provides a methodology to examine disparity in social and economic rights fulfillment between regions in a country, or between ethnic or other population subgroups.

The most recent update of the SERF Index (the 2017 Update) covers the 2005 to 2015 period and provides data on the composite SERF index for over 100 countries and data on the substantive Right Indices for 140 to 180 countries depending on the right and year. The SERF and Right Index scores show the percentage of the feasible achievement obtained, given the country’s per capita income level: (indicator score/benchmark score) x 100. A low score means a country is not fulfilling the rights concerned nearly to the extent that is possible at its per capita income level. In the case of a country with a high per capita income, the country’s SERF score on a right or right aspect could well be lower than the raw indicator score reflecting the enjoyment level of the right or right aspect. A SERF score of 100% on a right or right aspect DOES NOT MEAN everyone in the country enjoys the right; it means the country is doing as well at ensuring the right as the best performing country has at that per capita income level. Thus, in the case of a very poor country, the SERF or Right Index score on the right can be quite high even though the enjoyment level of the right is quite limited.

- The SERF data can be downloaded from the Economic and Social Rights Empowerment Initiative’s website (www.serfindex.org or www.serfindex.uconn.edu)
- Data visualization tools for the component right indices are under development and will be available from the Human Rights Measurement Initiative’s website (www.humanrightsmeasurement.org) by the end of the year.