



UN General Assembly event
to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of
the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development

**“The Right to Development at 25:
Policy Coherence in the Global Partnership for Development”**

10 a.m. -12 noon, Tuesday, 8 November 2011
Conference Room 4, NLB
UN Headquarters, New York

Background

The 4th of December 2011 marks the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development by the General Assembly.¹ The right to development has since been continuously and consistently reaffirmed by the international community not least in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the 2000 Millennium Declaration, the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the 2010 MDGs Review Summit and the 2011 Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2011-2020.

The 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development envisions a comprehensive process of development for the constant improvement of the well-being of all, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and fair distribution of the resulting benefits. Built on the foundation of human dignity, development is declared a right that entitles “every human person and all peoples to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized”.² The framework of the Declaration - enshrining development in its most holistic sense; integrating all human rights, development and peace, security and disarmament; upholding self-determined development and full sovereignty over natural wealth and resources; promoting an enabling environment and eliminating obstacles to development - is key to fair, humane and sustainable development, essential to the survival of all humanity in an interdependent world.

In the contemporary global context, the multiple crises experienced by the international community expose weaknesses in the prevailing global economic system and underline the need for better international governance especially in the economic and financial spheres. The persistent rise of conflict, war and violence, and disasters, both natural and man-made, and the resounding calls for change worldwide make clear the need for inclusive, participatory, democratic, transparent, non-discriminatory and equitable processes of development and governance both globally and locally, as envisaged by the Declaration on the Right to Development.

¹ UNGA resolution A/RES/41/128.

² Article 1, UN Declaration on the Right to Development .

The vision of international cooperation in the Declaration is rights-based and founded in sovereign equality, interdependence and mutual interest. The UN Charter itself sets out as a purpose of the United Nations, the achievement of international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction. Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth therein can be fully realized. The Millennium Declaration which expresses the need to make the right to development a reality for everyone perceives the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility as essential to international relations in the twenty-first century.

The right to development reinforces the individual and collective responsibilities of States for the creation of national and international conditions which are conducive to human rights-based development, at both the national and international levels. This helps to ensure that the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalized are taken into account in economic growth policies. Mainstreaming the right to development at all levels, through activities to strengthen global partnership for development between all concerned actors, can be vital in realizing the purposes and principles of the UN system, as reflected in the Charter.

General Assembly resolution 48/141, which established the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights, explicitly includes the mandate for the High Commissioner “to promote and protect the realization of the right to development and to enhance support from relevant bodies of the United Nations system for this purpose.” Through its annual resolution on the right to development, the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner to report on its implementation, including efforts undertaken at the national, regional and international levels in the promotion and realization of the right to development. It requests the High Commissioner to mainstream the right to development and to “undertake effectively activities aimed at strengthening the global partnership for development between Member States, development agencies and the international development, financial and trade institutions.”³

The meaningful implementation of these mandates requires coherence in the endeavours of the First, Second and Third Committees of the GA, addressing respectively disarmament and international security, economics and finance, and social, humanitarian and cultural issues, because of the intrinsic links between peace, human rights and development, further magnified in an era of global interdependence.

Development and human rights are the most secure basis for peace.⁴ Under Article 56 of the Charter, all Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in cooperation with the Organization to further the purposes enshrined in Article 55 which recognizes that conditions of stability and well-being are necessary for peaceful international relations. Peace and security, human rights and development are interrelated in the UN Charter, in the Declaration on the Right to Development and in the daily reality of the lives of millions of peoples the world over. The meaningful implementation of the right to development requires policy coherence and synergy in the agenda of the First, Second and Third Committees. In this context and on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development, an event will take place on 8 November 2011 in New York to mark this anniversary at the UN Headquarters in New York involving delegates or representatives from the above-mentioned Committees.

³ A/RES/65/219.

⁴ “An Agenda for Peace”, United Nations, New York, 1992; “An Agenda for Development”, United Nations, New York, 1994.

Objectives

The commemorative meeting to be held at the UN Headquarters to mark 25 years of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development will provide the international community with an opportunity to:

- Reflect on the Declaration on the Right to Development which builds on the foundations of the UN system and the three interlinked pillars of the UN Charter - peace and security, human rights and development - to explore the way forward to ensuring freedom from want and freedom from fear for all;
- Consider how the right to development which emerged out of the historical context of decolonization and independence, can equally address challenges posed by the contemporary context of globalization and interdependence, and how it can be mainstreamed across the UN system and beyond;
- Facilitate dialogue among the First, Second and Third Committees, UN system bodies and agencies and other stakeholders especially civil society organizations, on development as a human right in the broader context of globalization, global, regional and national governance, international cooperation and solidarity;
- Discuss the relationship between the right to development, and the major objectives, programmes and activities across the UN-system;
- Exchange views on how system-wide coherence in policy and practice can be promoted in the implementation of the right to development and how synergy and convergence can be enhanced by States acting both individually and collectively;
- Identify key areas for further conversation, coordination and coherence for the realization of the right to development, among the key stakeholders, to facilitate shared responsibility and mutual accountability by the international community.

Modalities

The meeting will take place from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on Tuesday, 8 November, in Conference Room 4, North Lawn Building, UN Headquarters, NY. The meeting will be chaired by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, will deliver an opening statement, followed by a statement by the President of the General Assembly. The Chairpersons of the First, Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly are expected to attend and make remarks at this event.

There will then be an interactive dialogue at which interested Member States, United Nations specialized agencies and high-level officials of the United Nations system may make statements. The meeting will end with closing statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
