



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9 September 2016

Excellency,

Pursuant to my letter, dated 19 July 2016, related to the mandated one day high level segment of the General Assembly, in the margin of the general debate of the Assembly to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development, I have the honor to share with Member States the provisional programme of the segment as well as a concept note.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairs of Regional Groups for submitting the lists of nominated delegations to speak at the General Debate of the Segment. Those nominated delegations are kindly requested to inscribe on the list of speakers at DGACM (Ms. Maria Isabel Alejandrino email: [alejandrino@un.org](mailto:alejandrino@un.org)) by Friday 16 September 2016.

I would like also to remind delegations that the time allocated to each speaker is 3 three minutes per speaker and will be strictly enforced in cases it would be exceeded, in order to accommodate all speakers within the agreed time frame.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York

**CONCEPT NOTE**  
**High-level Plenary Event**  
**On the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development**  
**Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York**  
**22 September 2016**

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I. Introduction

The United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development unequivocally establishes development as a right and puts people at the centre of the development process. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 4 December 1986, the Declaration proclaims that everyone is “entitled 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.”

The year 2016 marks the Declaration’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This historic document remains very relevant in guiding our responses to a series of contemporary issues and challenges, including combating climate change, achieving sustainable development, reforming the global trade and financial system, including the reformation of the international financial institutions and addressing international trade governance issues without harming developmental efforts, as well as addressing democratic deficits and inequalities within and among countries.

Despite the passage of 30 years since the adoption of the Declaration, many children, women and men – the very subjects of development – still live in dire need of the fulfilment of their entitlement to a life of dignity, freedom and equal opportunity. Widening poverty gaps, food shortages, climate change, global financial crises, corruption and misappropriation of public funds, armed conflicts, rising unemployment, gross inequalities, and other pressing challenges reflect that the world still has a long way to go in fulfilling the right to development for everyone everywhere.

The Declaration on the Right to Development states that development is a comprehensive process with the objective to improve “the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution” of the resulting benefits. The right to development belongs to everyone, everywhere, without discrimination and with their participation. The Declaration recognizes that the right to development also implies “the full realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, which includes, subject to the relevant provisions of both International Covenants on Human Rights, the exercise of their inalienable right to full sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources.”

The Declaration also identifies obstacles to development, empowers individuals and peoples, calls for an enabling environment and good governance at both national and international levels, and enhances accountability of duty bearers, which include the states/governments, donors and recipients, international organisations, transnational corporations, and civil society.

Following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change, a new opportunity exists to reaffirm and complete the vision and objectives of the right to development. A mutual and consensual understanding and effective implementation of the right to development is vital to realizing the SDGs.

The key to the achievement of the SDGs is the strengthening of the means of implementation through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. The SDGs means of implementation put emphasis on finance, technology, capacity building, trade and systemic issues such as policy coherence. But, if global partnership and international cooperation are essential means for achieving the SDGs, what ought to be our approach to realizing and implementing these very means? No SDG can be effectively achieved without SDG17 (Means of implantation). Here, a right to development approach provides a wider perspective on the implementation of SDGs, by viewing it as an expression of the duty of States towards international cooperation, which is not only enshrined in the 1986 Declaration, but also in the UN Charter.

According to the Declaration, "States have the duty to cooperate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development". In spite of hard-won development gains, the international community has yet to fully utilize the potential of the Declaration on the Right to Development, partly due to politicization and polarization within the international community.

## II: Objective

The primary objective of the High Level Plenary Event is to build common ground on how the international community defines and understands the right to development. The High Level Plenary Event also aims to identify how efforts to fulfil the right to development can be fortified in the future by building synergies and coherence with mutual and consensual understanding of the right to development based on the experience of progress and challenges in the last 30 years.

## III. Format

The one-day High Level Plenary Event will consist of an opening session, followed by a plenary session.

### i. Opening session (10:00am-11:00am)

The opening session of the High-level thematic debate will feature special addresses by the President of the General Assembly, the UN Secretary-General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary General of UNCTAD.

## ii. Plenary Session (11:00am-6:00pm)

The plenary session will be devoted to sharing views on lessons learned, best practices, as well as policy recommendations for the fulfilment of the right to development in follow up to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and with a view to fair and balanced global governance.

The plenary session will touch upon some critical questions, including:

- a. What has been the progress made since 1986 and what challenges lie ahead for the fulfilment of the right to development?
- b. How does the Declaration on the Right to Development remain relevant in guiding our responses to a series of contemporary global issues and challenges, including combating climate change, achieving sustainable development and reforming the global trade and financial system?
- c. In spite of the clarity and authority of the Declaration on the Right to Development, different countries or groups of countries have promoted different views on the right to development. The perceptions on what the right to development means in practice or how to realize it could not be more diverse. Is there common ground for a consensual and mutual understanding among States as to what the right to development means, why it is important, and how it should be realised?
- d. The SDGs can only be achieved through international cooperation with strong legal grounding. How should global partnerships, which are key elements as the means of implementation for the SDGs, be based on the right to development? Could we come up with measurable indicators for fulfilment? Is there a working list of criteria to be employed for the evaluation for existing development partnerships?

## IV. Outcome

The outcome of the High-level Plenary Event will be a President's summary which will be circulated to all Member States.

*High-Level GA Segment to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development*

22 September 2016  
Trusteeship Council, UN Headquarters, New York

**Provisional programme**

**10:00am-10:30am: Opening Segment**

*Keynote Speakers*

- H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the United Nations General Assembly
- H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General
- H.E. Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- H.E. Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, UNCTAD's Secretary-General

**10:30am-1:00pm: General Debate**

Representatives of Member States nominated by regional groups: three (3) minutes max

**3:00pm-6:00pm: General Debate**

Representatives of Member States nominated by regional groups: three (3) minutes max