



Sustainable Development with Dignity and Justice for All

Realizing the Right to Development for Present and Future Generations

Organized by

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Tuesday 2 December 2014

9.00 a.m. – 12.45 p.m.

Room V

Palais des Nations, Geneva

“The right to development should be fulfilled so as to meet equitably the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.”

Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992 (reaffirmed in ‘The Future We Want’ 2012); and Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action 1993.

Background

The UN Declaration on the Right to Development,¹ adopted on 4 December 1986, defines development as ‘an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are 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.’² It places on States a duty to formulate national and international development policies aimed at the constant improvement of human well-being as well as a duty to cooperate to ensure development and eliminate obstacles to development. The Declaration calls for disarmament, and upholds self-determination and sovereignty over natural wealth and resources; requires active, free and meaningful participation in development and fair distribution of its benefits; and makes equality of opportunity for development ‘a prerogative both of nations and of individuals who make up nations’.³ It supports a social and international order in which all rights and freedoms can be realized by all, as envisioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁴

Development is sustainable when it “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”⁵ The principles of sustainable development are enshrined in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and confirmed in subsequent instruments. They include equity and justice for present and future generations - inter - and intra - generational equity; and recognize that “Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life

¹ UNGA Resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986.

² Article 1(1), Declaration on the Right to Development.

³ Preamble, Declaration on the Right to Development.

⁴ GA. Doc. A/810, 1948.

⁵ ‘Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development’, Oxford University Press, New York, 1987, chap. 2, para. 1.

in harmony with nature.”⁶ “The future we want”, Outcome Document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012,⁷ reaffirmed all the principles of the Rio Declaration, and the commitment to fully implement it. We now face a future in which climate change, together with all the other crises of our times, continue to change the world in fundamental ways. This requires us to re-think among others, our model of development. The UN Declaration on the Right to Development embodies a paradigm for development with dignity and justice for all. It encompasses the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, and therefore must be at the heart of our quest for comprehensive and sustainable development. Its integral link to sustainable development was recognized in the Rio Declaration and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action: “The right to development should be fulfilled so as to meet equitably the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.”⁸ The right to development presents a vision for transformative development, as it demands an enabling environment at both the national and international level, for development that addresses root causes, systemic issues and structural challenges.

In establishing the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the General Assembly entrusted the High Commissioner with a duty to mainstream the right to development,⁹ and to strengthen the global partnership for development. As we commemorate the anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development at a time when the international community is engaged in the elaboration of the post-2015 Development Agenda, OHCHR is organizing an event to discuss and illustrate the relevance and significance of the right to development for present and future generations, including through the future development agenda and goals. The event is open to delegates, representatives of UN system organizations and civil society as well as all other relevant stakeholders. Participants are encouraged to share stories, good practices, case studies and practical suggestions to illustrate how the right to development can help realize sustainable development, including through the Sustainable Development Goals and their deliverables and how these can support the right to development. They may use this occasion to reflect, network and mobilize to identify measures in support of realizing the right to development, keeping dignity and justice alive for all.

Objectives

- To reflect on how the right to development can be fulfilled so as to meet equitably the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations;
- To consider the rights of children in the context of the right to development and sustainable development;¹⁰
- To discuss developmental challenges faced by Small Island Developing States in the face of climate change;¹¹
- To explore how the development model presented by the Declaration on the Right to Development supports inclusive, equitable, integral and sustainable development (discussion of the disaster in Bhopal¹² and lessons learned from the ensuing struggle).

⁶ Rio Declaration on Environment and Development UN Doc. A/CONF.151/26, 14 June 1992, principle 1.

⁷ UNGA Resolution 66/288 Annex of 20 December 2012.

⁸ Rio Declaration, Principle 3; and Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, Vienna, 25 June 1993, UN Doc. A/CONF.157/23, para. 11.

⁹ GA resolution 48/141.

¹⁰ 2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This provides an opportunity to consider the relevance of the right to development for the children of the world.

¹¹ 2014 is the International Year of Small Island Developing States. For entire populations in SIDS, their lives, livelihoods, survival as peoples, self-determination, sovereignty and natural and cultural heritage are under threat from the impacts of climate change.

¹² 30 years ago, on the night of 2-3 December 1984, the people of Bhopal in India were exposed to 40 tons of toxic gas which escaped from a pesticide plant of a subsidiary of a transnational corporation. The disaster which claimed over 20,000 lives, still continues to have human health, environmental and inter-generational effects from exposure, soil and groundwater contamination. Likewise, the struggle for justice in Bhopal continues to date.

Programme

9.00 - 9.15a.m.

Ms. Jane Connors, Director, Research and Right to Development Division, OHCHR, will deliver opening remarks.

9.15 - 10.45a.m. Panel I

Realizing a Vision for Transformative Development: Challenges and Paths to Progress

Moderator: Mr. Craig Mokhiber, Chief, Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch, OHCHR.

Ms. Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India - 'Obstacles posed by the International Economic Architecture on Realising the Right to Sustainable Development'; **Mr. Manuel Montes**, Senior Advisor on Finance and Development, South Centre, Geneva, Switzerland - 'The Right to Development and the SAMOA Pathway'; **Ms. Jumoke Oduwole**, Lecturer, University of Lagos, Nigeria and Holder of the Prince Claus Chair in Development and Equity 2013-2015, International Institute of Social Studies (The Hague), Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands - 'Ebola Virus and the Right to Development: Realizing State Responsibility'; **Monsignor Silvano Tomasi**, Head of Delegation, Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, Geneva, 'Implementing the Right to Development for Justice and Peace'.

10.45 - 11.15a.m.

Break

11.15a.m. – 12.45p.m. Panel II

In Fairness to Present and Future Generations: Illustrations and Lessons Learned

Moderator: Mr. Bat-Erdene Ayush, Chief, Right to Development Section, OHCHR

Mr. N. D. Jayaprakash, Joint Secretary, Delhi Science Forum and Co-Convenor, *Bhopal Gas Peedith Sangharsh Sahayog Samiti* (Coalition for Supporting the Cause of the Bhopal Gas Victims), 'The Path to Sustainable Development: Lessons from the Bhopal Disaster'; **Mr. Baskut Tuncak**, UN Special Rapporteur on the Implications for Human Rights of the Environmentally Sound Management and Disposal of Hazardous Substances and Wastes, 'The Implications of Hazardous Substances on the Rights of Future Generations'; **Ms. Karin Arts**, Professor of International Law and Development, International Institute of Social Studies (The Hague), Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands - 'Advancing the Right to Development: A Child Rights - Based Perspective'; **Ms. Ariel King**, Youth and Children's Rights Advocate and President, Ariel Foundation International, 'Young People's Participation at the United Nations to Shape the World They Want to See'.

For more information including on the publication '*Realizing the Right to Development*' please visit www.ohchr.org

For attendees without UN badges please send a request for registration by e-mail to R2D@ohchr.org