

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF
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**AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY EVENT TO
COMMEMORATE THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED
NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

**66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Mr. Secretary-General,
Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Madam High Commissioner,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be invited here today to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development. The 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development envisions a comprehensive process of development, be it economic, social, cultural and political process for the constant improvement of the wellbeing of all individuals.

I would like to highlight the importance of implementing a constructive approach in promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Democracy and good governance at the national and international levels, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the right to development, are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Equal treatment should be given to both civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

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. Like all human rights, the right to development belongs to all individuals and peoples, everywhere, without discrimination and with their participation.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) which was adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria in June 1993 reaffirms this right to development in which States should cooperate with each

other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development. The international community should promote an effective international cooperation for the realization of the right to development and the elimination of obstacles to development.

The Vienna Declaration also reaffirms that the right to development should be fulfilled so as to meet equitably the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations. Thus, addressing the current challenges in order to prepare future generation is a responsibility we all share. Allow me to highlight the crisis that is affecting the youth of today. A report by the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO), "Global Employment Trends for Youth: 2011 Update," warns of a youth jobs crisis in both developed and developing countries, with young people aged 15 to 24 finding it increasingly difficult to obtain decent employment. When the cornerstone of development, namely the creation of decent jobs fails to be met, not only social hazards associated with joblessness and prolonged inactivity will ensue, possible longer-term consequences such as poverty will also follow.

Additionally, we should take the opportunity of this 25th anniversary to advance the causes of women. Some of the challenges in the fight for gender equality include the fact that women continued to be highly underrepresented in top decision-making in both the public and private sectors. On average only one in six cabinet ministers is a woman, and only 30 of the 500 largest corporations in the world have a female chief executive. There should be positive trends of women in political participation, enrolment in educational institutions, and access to employment, even in profession's traditionally dominated by men.

As you can recall, during the 2010 MDG Summit, Member States recognize that gender equality, the empowerment of women, women's full enjoyment of all human rights and the eradication of poverty are essential to economic and social development, as enshrined in the Declaration on the Right to Development.

Furthermore, during the Third Committee Meeting on the promotion and protection of the rights of children recently, the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child with a special focus on children with disabilities was presented. Children with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups and suffer widespread violations of their rights. They are denied access to education and health care, opportunities for play and culture, an adequate standard of living and the right to be heard. They are discriminated against and treated as an invisible burden. In some cultures,

disability is viewed as a curse or punishment. A child with an impairment is blamed as the embodiment of past failure, inadequacy or sins.

The needs and potential of children with disabilities have been ignored far too often. Of the 72 million children out of school today, as many as a third has a disability. These innocent children are not only vulnerable to discrimination; many are being subjected to outright segregation from society. Member States thus have an obligation to guarantee that children with disabilities are included in a country's development agenda.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2002 reestablished the focus of the international community on the agenda on ageing, emphasizing development and international cooperation and assistance in this area. It is a result of the composition of the world population which has changed dramatically in recent decades. According to the Secretary-General's report that was presented at the Third Committee recently, between 1950 and 2010, life expectancy worldwide rose from 46 to 68 years, and it is projected to increase to 81 by the end of the century. For the first time in human history there will be more persons over 60 than children in the world in 2050.

Almost 700 million people are now over the age of 60. By 2050, 2 billion people or 20 per cent of the world's population will be 60 or older. The increase in the number of older people will be the greatest and the most rapid in the developing world. With this in mind, enhanced attention to the particular needs and challenges faced by many older people is clearly required. The international community should realize that the majority of older men and women can continue to make essential contribution to the functioning of society if adequate guarantees are in place. The Madrid Meeting thus emphasized the importance of mainstreaming the concerns and needs of older persons into development policies and programmes at the international as well as the national level. Human rights lie at the core of all efforts in this regard.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As stated in the Declaration on the Right to Development, the human person is the central subject of development. All human beings have a responsibility for development, individually and collectively, taking into account the need for full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as their duties

to the community. They should therefore promote and protect an appropriate political, social and economic order for development. These areas of development can be achieved through global partnership. An effective global partnership for development, underpinned through human rights-based policy coherence and coordination at all levels, is the very foundation for achieving the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals in an equitable, inclusive and sustainable manner.

The purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. Economic, social, cultural and political development, if they are to be meaningful and sustainable, must involve all citizens. It requires placing people at the centre of development in order to meet human needs more effectively. Growth in all areas of development must be in tandem to ensure that freedom in development is achievable by all.

Thank you.