

Introductory Remarks on Criteria and Operational Sub-Criteria for the Implementation of the Right to Development for the 15th Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group

Oral Joint Statement submitted by the Working Group on the Right to Development and International Solidarity of the Geneva Catholic-Inspired NGOs Forum: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Association Points-Coeur, Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities), Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), International Institute of Mary Our Help of the Salesians of Don Bosco, International Volunteerism Organization for Women Education and Development, International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education, and New Humanity.

Introduction

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following Catholic-inspired organizations that constitute the Working Group on the Right to Development and International Solidarity of the Geneva Catholic-Inspired NGOs Forum: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Association Points-Coeur, Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities), Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), International Institute of Mary Our Help of the Salesians of Don Bosco, International Volunteerism Organization for Women Education and Development, International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education, and New Humanity.

Our organizations are present at grass-root level and work with people living in poverty, in both developing and developed countries, as they strive to achieve their Integral Human Development. On a daily basis, we observe how crucial and urgent it is for all countries to fully implement the Right to Development in order to overcome structural international and national obstacles that are root causes of increasing inequities between and within countries and that perpetuate extreme poverty. It is with a sense of duty to accompany the voiceless of the world that we transmit to the Members States the urgent need to overcome the long political and polarized debate and make the Right to Development a reality for everyone.

Our Working Group already submitted three joint written contributions that are included in the official documentation; the last one focuses on the Criteria and Operational sub-Criteria under revision during this current session.

In addition to our written contributions, we would like to shed further light on few points that are mainly related to the process of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group, and, in our opinion, crucial for speeding up the implementation of the Right to Development:

- Since the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group decided, during previous sessions, to maintain the matrix of the High Level Task Force in the revision of the Criteria and Operational sub-Criteria, we would suggest that, at the end of the first reading and before the beginning of the second reading, a **compiled report** will be drafted by the Secretariat. Such a compiled report, still be based on the matrix of the High Level Task Force, should also contain the suggestions proposed by all the stakeholders, civil society included, during the first reading. This compiled report will give the opportunity to see, at glance, the discussion already carried on during the first reading.

- Between the first and second reading of the Criteria and Operational sub-Criteria, and before the discussion on measurability, the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group should set up a **phase of implementation** of all the Criteria and Operational sub-Criteria contained on the compiled report. Such an implementation phase should be set up because of the centrality of the person and the people within the Right to Development. People are those who are in the best position to suggest the correct criteria, operational sub-criteria and indicators that reflect their real needs. The Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group should listen to the people, consult them, and let them to participate to the process, as indicated in the Declaration on the Right to Development. During this implementation phase, States, in collaboration with International Organizations and Civil Society Organizations, including Faith-Based Organizations, should collect good practices and/or organize national consultations by involving people at grass-root level, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable in society.

In conjunction with the above-mentioned implementation phase, a group of experts, selected on a national basis, should examine the compiled report in order to suggest appropriate indicators. These experts should maintain a constant dialogue with International Organizations and Civil Society Organizations, including Faith-Based Organizations.

The two above-mentioned processes, that should not exceed two years, should merge into a final document that, alongside with the compiled report, will feed the second reading for the final decision on Criteria, Operational sub-Criteria, and Indicators of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group.

Madam Chair,

In conclusion, we would like to recall that the first obstacle for the implementation of the Right to Development that needs to be urgently removed is the actual polarisation and politicisation of the debate. Such a polarisation has been evident also during the last informal session.

It is time and right for Member States of different coalitions to move from rhetoric to action, bearing in mind that the life, well-being and respect of Human Rights of so many people worldwide depends greatly from the implementation of the Right to Development.

Thank you.