



Statement by Mr. Saad Alfarargi

Special Rapporteur on the right to development

**Leaving no one behind- the role of participation and equality in
implementing the Sustainable Development Goals**

17 September 2018, 12h00-13h30

Room XXVII, Palais des Nations

Your excellences, distinguished delegates, representatives of civil society, ladies and gentlemen.

Today, I have the honour to host, together with the Non-Aligned Movement, this side-event entitled *Leaving no one behind- the role of participation and equality in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.*

As you may be aware, in September 2017, the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution 36/9, which requested me to hold regional consultations on the implementation of the right to development. I have so far convened two regional consultations- for the States from the African Group in Addis Ababa in March this year and for the States from the Group of Western European and other States and from the Eastern European Group, in Geneva in June. I will convene two more consultation before the end of this year, for the Latin American and Caribbean countries in October and for Asian and Pacific countries in December.

Throughout the discussions in both consultations, I heard one overarching concern, namely the difficulties in ensuring **effective participation and inclusion** of all stakeholders in development processes at the local, national, regional and international levels. So how can genuine, wide and meaningful participation be achieved? Overwhelmingly, the response of civil society to that question has been: through wider access to information regarding development policies, programmes and projects for all concerned stakeholders and constituencies and through planning and budgeting for genuine consultation mechanisms.

Access to information and participation will lead to better understanding of the development processes, and widen support for much needed reforms. Participation will also help in designing, implementing, monitoring and

evaluating the results of development programmes and projects in a meaningful way and increasing their effectiveness and efficiency. Effective participation also helps mobilizing domestic resources, including human resources, and fosters a culture of accountability. Last but not least, it would lead to greater accountability and contribute to tackling endemic issues, such as corruption and lack of good governance.

The participants in the two regional consultations held so far, provided a considerable number of practical recommendations on designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development policies, programmes and projects in a manner that is compliant with the right to development. Summaries of the recommendations from these and future consultations are available on the website of my mandate.

In my report, which I presented to the Human Rights Council last week, I focused primarily on addressing inequalities within countries. I have concluded that the widening disparities of today's world require the adoption of sound national and international policies to empower the bottom percentile of income earners and to promote inclusion of all regardless of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

I have provided a set of recommendations on the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right to development in the context of the implementation of the equality-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The first cluster of my recommendation is related to **identifying those left behind**. To meet the commitment of reaching the furthest behind first, it is crucial that we gather the data and knowledge necessary to identify those segments of our societies that we need to reach as a matter of priority. We need

adequate data that is disaggregated by gender, age, disability, income, race, ethnicity and other relevant factors in order to truthfully assess the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes. I would like to underline that data collection should be based on the principles of participation; informed consent (meaning, inter alia, that the consulted communities and individuals should have full information about the purposes of the data collection); and self-identification (meaning that individuals should be able to identify themselves as members of a minority or an indigenous people, rather than the State's authorities determining such membership). To achieve that:

- National statistics agencies need to be properly equipped to collect data by developing capacity to use qualitative and quantitative human rights indicators when analysing inequalities.
- States should systematically and coherently assess their progress towards implementing Sustainable Development Goals 10 and 5 and other targets related to equality in their voluntary national reviews.
- States need to seek innovative approaches to bridge capacity gaps in data collection, including by encouraging communities to collect data themselves and with the help of relevant civil society organizations and academic bodies.
- States should continue their efforts at identifying, acknowledging and addressing the root causes of inequality and discrimination. States should support and invest in independent critical research and conduct comparative studies, resorting to both qualitative and quantitative methods.

I devoted a second cluster of recommendations to **ensuring participatory processes**, which are of utmost importance from the perspective of the right to development. Evaluating how this can best be accomplished is a

critical first step in the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. **The success of targeted policies and programmes will depend largely on the level of effective participation and meaningful consultation of the beneficiaries.**

- A key task is to ensure inclusiveness and meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders at all levels of decision-making. Enabling disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups to actively participate in decision-making processes is essential to overcome structural inequalities and discrimination; to ensure their place as key actors in the development of their own communities and society; and to ensure that all stakeholders benefit from development outcomes.
- States, as the duty-bearers for reducing inequalities and ensuring sustainable development of societies, must ensure **that participatory approaches, reaching all concerned segments of the society, are developed and adequately financed.**
- **The cost of civil society participation should be duly budgeted into development planning processes at both policy and programmatic levels.** States should also work to increase the capacity of civil society to develop technical expertise and provide space for coordinated actions with governments.
- States must also establish **mechanisms for easy and effective access to up-to-date information related to development policies and processes**, define reliable information schemes while designing development plans, and allocate adequate resources to that end.
- Ensuring that no one is left behind requires a dedicated focus on the equal rights of women and on ensuring women's participation in decision-making. **States must take action to provide genuine opportunities and strengthen capacity of women to actively and meaningfully participate in national planning, policy design, implementation and budgeting, which affect their**

own livelihoods and wellbeing. Participation of women without discrimination of any kind in economic and political decision-making and policy formulation is not only crucial for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment, but it is also indispensable for improving the effectiveness of all development processes.

Finally, I devoted a cluster of recommendations to accountability mechanisms. It is my conviction that participation can only be genuine and effective, if it is accompanied by adequate accountability mechanisms. To achieve that:

- Detailed information schemes should be integrated in all development policies and activities at the international, regional and domestic levels, including information as to how affected individuals and communities can claim their rights when they believe that these rights have been violated in the context of development processes.
- National accountability mechanisms, such as anti-discrimination complaints mechanisms, should have the capacity to process and provide effective remedies for violations. Existing mechanisms must be made more visible and accessible, including to persons speaking minority languages and persons with disabilities. National human rights institutions can also play a role in ensuring equal participation in economic, social, cultural and political development by, for example, taking up social and economic rights issues and discrimination complaints.

I hope that today I will hear from all of you more examples of good practices models and mechanisms that ensure the effective participation of all relevant stakeholders in development processes. I would like this discussion to serve as a catalyst in our efforts to ensure that the right to development is integrated in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development and the rest of the development policy framework, adopted in 2015.

I thank you all for your kind attention.