



**THE TWELFTH SESSION
OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT
Palais des Nations, Room XVI
14-18 November 2011**

**CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE
CHAIRPERSON-RAPPORTEUR OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT
Tamara Kunanayakam (Sri Lanka)**

18 November 2011

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We have come to the end of this year's Working Group Session! It was indeed an honour and pleasure for me to have chaired this Working Group, not least because of my personal interest in and passion for the subject. We are, indeed, very pleased that this 25th Anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development has given us the opportunity to contribute toward promoting the values and principles to which we are all, without distinction, attached.

In my opening remarks, I underlined the need to identify concrete ways and means of putting into practice the commitments we undertook in adopting the UN Declaration on the Right to Development and removing the obstacles to its implementation.

Today, we are experiencing a historical period characterized by multiple crises! But, as we are all aware, crises are always harbingers of change, transformation, and even rupture. In the words of a poet, « *L'heure la plus sombre vient toujours avant l'aube* ».

In this context, I see this as a period of opportunities that we must have the courage to seize for the very survival of humanity. It is no longer an option, but a necessity! It is time we realized that life itself, and its sustenance on this planet, is at stake, and that the time has come to face and address it. In order to move forward in our common search, what counts above all, is political will, morality and ethics!

The urgency and resoluteness with which we should engage ourselves in the task assigned to us cannot be denied! Multiple global crises; growing inequalities, poverty, exploitation and injustices; violence, racism and intolerance; all these have their origins and their causes. Under the circumstances, the mandate given to this Working Group may appear all the more challenging, and yet, these same challenges can provide us with real and concrete opportunities to forge ahead in the struggle for the realization of this fundamental and inalienable human right to development.

I am convinced that the right to development is not just a concept, but the means by which the human person, individually and collectively, will become the principal actor of his or her own destiny. Is that not, after all, what the authors of the Declaration sought to achieve? Hence there can be no single model of development! It is up to all peoples and States, given their cultural and historical specificities,

to choose the economic, political and social systems in which they want to live, work, and realize their full creative potential. International solidarity and cooperation are the shared responsibility of States to create the conditions that are necessary to make that right a reality.

I am pleased that consensus has been reached on the way forward. I thank you for your co-operation and your constructive approach and efforts to find common ground.

I am very grateful for the support and understanding that I have received in carrying out my task as Chair of this Working Group. I am deeply honoured by the trust you have placed in me to carry out the challenging task of guiding this Working Group in the inter-sessional period through informal consultations.

Before concluding, and on behalf of this Working Group, I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay for her support in promoting the right to development on the occasion of this 25th Anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development.

I also wish to express my gratitude to all of you for your active and constructive participation in this session. My thanks go out to Member States and UN system funds, programmes and specialised agencies, Inter-governmental organisations, as well as to non-governmental organisations.

Thank you!