***In Search of Dignity and Sustainable Development for All***

***ABSTRACTS OF SPEAKERS***

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

**H.E. Mr. Zamir Akram - *Future Steps towards the Right to Development after adoption of the 2030 Agenda***

It is regrettable that after 30 years since its adoption the Declaration on the Right to Development remains a controversial document and this inalienable human right remains unfulfilled. The consensus adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Goals, however, provide a significant opening and valuable opportunity to implement the Declaration on the Right to Development. The essential requirement is for States supported by Civil Society and International Organizations, to take practical measures at the national, regional and international levels, guided by a renewed commitment to international cooperation signified by the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. While key obstacles to an enabling environment may not be overcome in the foreseeable future, efforts must nevertheless be made to overcome the core threats to human development such as poverty, hunger and inequality.

**Dr. Mihir Kanade - *Advancing Peace, Rights and Well-being: A Right to Development Approach to SDGs as the Way Forward***

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 heralded an unprecedented common global agenda for transforming our world by 2030. The 17 SDGs and the accompanying 169 targets are not only comprehensive, but more importantly, integrated and interdependent as well. The inter-linkages between peace, human rights, well-being, and the environment, run through the 2030 Agenda like a golden thread weaving together a common framework for sustainable development. While the holistic nature of the 2030 Agenda is a significant advancement from the previous MDGs framework, the question still remains as to what might be the most appropriate approach to implementing the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda explicitly states that it is informed by the Declaration on the Right to Development. A closer look at this Agenda reveals that it also reaffirms the right to development and is indeed grounded in it. This presentation will build on these acknowledgements and identify the bedrock principles underpinning the right to development which must inform and guide the implementation of the SDGs, if they are to be successful. It will conclude that a right to development approach to the SDGs is indeed indispensable if we are to realistically usher in an era where peace, human rights and well-being, including ecological sustainability, are advanced.

**Dr. Priscilla Schwartz -** ***Powering the Right to Development: Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate***

Energy is a creative force of life from which human beings and the environment sustain for development. Sustainable energy is posited in this presentation as an inalienable right to development that can enable peoples to participate in, contribute to and enjoy a fair distribution of benefits. Goal 7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises the importance of energy as a RTD in seeking to ensure sustainable and modern energy for all. But climate-informed development strategies have locked-in the right to sustainable energy with climate mitigation measures that are predominantly growth and business oriented. How can the poorest and most vulnerable be assured of sustainable energy as a RTD in a changing economic and environmental climate? This presentation offers perspectives on the conflict between the climate business agenda and powering the RTD and sustainable energy for the world's poor. It will suggest legal, regulatory and educational tools for addressing the conflicts and areas for policy research with a view to upholding people's right to sustainable energy as inherent in their RTD.

**Dr. Maria Mercedes Rossi – *Claiming the Right to Development for Social Justice in Development***

The Catholic Inspired NGO Working Group on the Right to Development strongly advocates the implementation of the Right to Development. By striving to create an enabling international and national environment to overcome structural obstacles and challenges, the Declaration on the Right to Development, if fully implemented, will lead to social justice and lasting peace in the world. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development appears to have incorporated the transformative vision of the Declaration on Right to Development in many respects. In terms of claiming the RTD, it is imperative to ask how much individuals and peoples at grass roots level know about the great potential of the right to development and how they can claim it. Some examples on how local communities, facilitated by faith-based organizations, carry out projects based on person/people centred development and active participation will be considered. This presentation will also consider the case of persons and peoples who are already claiming the right to development: not in terms yet of its justiciability, but, at the cost of their lives, like “boat people”, refugees and migrants; and those who die due to lack of essential medicines and decent health systems. Pope Francis’ appeal in his Encyclical “Laudato Sii” is strongly in line with the vision of the Declaration. NGOs must engage more with education on human rights and the right to development at the grass roots level, so that these rights can be claimed by the people.

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