



**CONCLUDING REMARKS BY
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SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE 2012 UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

**On the occasion of the 25th anniversary
of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to development**

**ECOSOC
Geneva, 12 July 2011**

Thank you, Madam High Commissioner,
Mr. Vice-President,
Madam High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be here with you on this important occasion.

The United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development declares that, and I quote: "Everyone is entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized" End of quote.

Twenty-five years after its adoption, we are still striving to make these ideals a reality for all. The picture is a mixed bag. We have made some headway in fighting poverty. But we still have billions of people living under \$2 a day. Many go hungry every night and millions are without shelter or clean water.

For billions, development still remains a mirage. I draw three conclusions from the current state of development. First, recognizing development as an "inalienable right" is an important step. But it is not sufficient for achieving development for all.

Second, a right can only be realized through the formulation and implementation of appropriate policies. There is a clear gap between declaration and implementation.

Third, countries have to fulfil their duties by creating an enabling environment. Otherwise, these words are hollow.

The Economic and Social Council has an important role to play in facilitating such an enabling environment. In this regard, ECOSOC can:

- promote higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress;
- identify solutions to international economic, social and health problems; and
- encourage universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I believe that the MDGs are a visible expression of the right to development. They demonstrate a commitment to translate the Declaration into concrete achievements. They show a determination to promote basic economic and social rights for the most disadvantaged populations. Our renewed efforts are crucial to make the right to development tangible and credible. I hope the Annual Ministerial Review plays a major role in strengthening accountability on the achievement of the MDGs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we all know, rights come with responsibilities. We are all endowed with a right to development. We must all be conscious of our responsibility to use finite resources in a sustainable manner.

The UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and its follow-up processes have been great achievements in sustainable development. The international agreements that emerged provide a useful framework for various actors to pursue sustainable development goals. In preparing for the forthcoming Rio+20 Conference, it is important we engage and mobilize all of these actors... the international community, governments, local authorities and major groups.

The Declaration on the Right to Development states that "States have the duty to cooperate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development."

The UN conferences held over the last two decades contain a number of commitments on such cooperation. Those commitments should be fulfilled if we are serious about the Right to Development.

These provisions are all the more relevant as the world is at a crossroads, in regards to multiple crises we face.

We must join hands in seeking cooperative solutions to our shared challenges.

Thank you.
