

## **OIC - NAM roundtable**

### **The Right to Development: Constraints and Perspectives**

**19 October 2011, Geneva**

#### **Statement by H.E. Hicham Badr Permanent Representative of Egypt and Chairman of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM)**

Your Excellency Ambassador El Cheikh and Mr. Ndiaye,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me pleasure, as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, to co-sponsor this important event commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the right to development.

25 years ago the General Assembly declared development as an “inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are 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”. In 1993, in the World Conference on Human Rights we reaffirmed this right as an integral part of fundamental human rights. Various summits, conferences and resolutions reaffirm this right and the declaration. But are we there yet in the realisation of this right?

The 4<sup>th</sup> of December exactly marks the date of the adoption of the UN declaration. This is a moment for celebration as well as a cause for reflection. We have to acknowledge that 25 years ago Member States amassed the political will to recognise the right to development for all individuals and peoples. At the same time, we have to take stock of how far we have translated this political will into action.

There is no denying the fact that the world community in various fora has been devising strategies, plans and programmes as well as elaborating goals and objectives for the sake of development. However, the launching of the various processes in this domain, be they the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, or the functioning of the international

financial institutions or the world trading regime, has been carried out with a demarcation line drawn between them and the rights-based approach. The end result of such demarcation as we see it today is unequal development patterns within and between countries against the backdrop of recurrent global crises and challenges. So, where do we go from here? We have to ask ourselves whether we have lived up to our commitments to fully realise the right to development, this crucible of all other human rights and fundamental freedoms, without the fulfilment of which those rights would be jeopardized. Interchangeably we have to adopt a rights-based approach to development and a development-based approach to human rights.

In the last few years, the international community, disproportionately developing countries, have had to bear the brunt of waves of crises, in particular the financial, economic and food crises, as well as challenges including environmental challenges, that loom over developing countries eroding their possibilities at attaining sustainable development. Such crises and challenges threaten to roll back efforts exerted at achieving development and run counter to the creation of an enabling international environment for the realisation of the right to development.

In addition, in our part of the world, namely in Arab countries, this year is witnessing an historic turning point the developments of which are still unfolding. The historic events in the Arab world merit special attention, as they were triggered by and couched in human rights demands. They constitute a challenge as well as opportunity. They open up prospects for us to demonstrate the national and international political will to respond to and fulfil the legitimate demands of Arab populations for freedom and development.

Concurrently, we need to have a common and sober assessment of the state of play of current affairs. Clearly, this is not an easy task; nevertheless we need only to look at the demonstrations that rallied across the world. These demonstrations had one aspect in common. People decided to evoke their inherent rights, the right and freedom of speech not only has it illustrated the magnitude of the resentment towards contemporary practices and the deficiencies underlying the global economic model that we have strived to achieve for decades, but also served as a wake-up call to policy makers indicating that business as usual can no longer be our preferred course of action. From Tahrir to Wall Street global "day of rage" has erupted. This is but a mere signal that the objectives, aspirations and intentions that we kept clinging on have not been as effective as we hoped they would be or simply that they are no longer suitable to satisfy the aspirations of the masses and attain their

right to development. We do not have the luxury to debate whether we have lived up to our commitments to fully realize this goal, especially at these challenging times. The mass demonstrations on the street tell us that we have not and this is the time for true action.

From a right to development perspective, the aforementioned events reemphasize the primary responsibility of states for the fulfilment of the human rights of their peoples as well as the responsibility of the international community to create the required international enabling environment for this purpose, through the fulfilment of the collective duty to cooperate and the engagement in international cooperation.

It has to be acknowledged that in addressing the right to development, and taking the declaration as a frame of reference, we need to address the variables related thereto, while being guided by the basic tenets of our work at the UN, namely to uphold peace and security, development and human rights. In a single document, the declaration on the right to development has been able to incorporate all those elements that in the end build up the structure of this comprehensive overarching right. As an umbrella right, it establishes the inter-linkages between those UN tenets and the actions required to fulfil them from a human rights-based approach.

In our roundtable today, we tackle the issues of disarmament, a subject that requires special attention when we address the limited resources available at the national and international levels earmarked for development, and also the agenda of the financing for development and the global partnerships for development. Other variables also come into play, for example intellectual property issues, technology transfer, and systemic issues of the current functioning of the international financial and trading regulations and systems.

Looking closely at those variables, we will see that they all have their impacts on the enjoyment of human rights, the rights to health, education, and food, just to name a few. And in looking further, we will realise that these rights and others are all development rights. In other words, they constitute the components of the right to development, the full realisation of which we should be seeking and striving for. Notwithstanding, from the legal perspective, the right to development is still to witness equality of treatment with all other human rights. It has to be codified into law with delineated lines of rights and responsibilities as an individual and collective right that requires action at the national level and an enabling environment at the international level, being guided by the collective responsibility of states to create such an environment. In doing so, the international community would be upholding

the principles of the universality, indivisibility, interdependence, and interrelatedness of all human rights.

In closing, let me express my confidence and hopes for a fruitful discussion today as a contribution to the debate on the right to development at its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Thank you.

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