

OIC - NAM roundtable
The Right to Development: Constraints and Perspectives
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Distinguished chairs of the OIC and NAM, Excellency Director-General of the UN, Excellencies, and Panelists,

First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank the OIC and NAM for organizing this discussion and providing an opportunity to share insights and concerns on a fundamental and inalienable human right, the right to development.

Many contributions reflect on the importance, the continued validity, and in a sense, the modernity of the right to development, *a fortiori*, in the context of today's multiple systemic crises that is affecting the poorest and the most vulnerable, particularly in the developing countries.

Prior to considering future perspectives, it is essential to reflect on what it was that its drafters sought to achieve; whether, twenty five years later, we are any closer to that achievement; if not, why?; and, how do we move

forward? The 25th anniversary of this Declaration is an opportune moment for such an exercise.

I wish to recall that the historic principles contained in the Declaration, rest on sources of legality, and that the concerns reflected in the instrument are primarily those of developing countries. The new concept entered the UN debate through the Non-Aligned Movement, and the basic principles can be traced as far back as the 1955 Bandung Conference of African-Asian States. For the newly independent States, political independence from colonial rule had not brought with it the promised economic independence or social wellbeing. Externally driven development strategies focusing on growth rather than on people and the international division of labour had further increased socio-economic disparities and external dependence.

It was during this period, that new concepts emerged giving rise to the right to development, defined as comprehensive, global, multidimensional, structural, and dynamic, in which the human person, individually and collectively, is the central subject, thus recognizing that there is no single model of development valid for all peoples, at all times. The realization of the right of peoples and States to determine their own economic, political, social and cultural system also gained recognition as a prerequisite for the realization of all other human rights.

It is in this context must be seen the adoption of instruments in the 1950s, 60s and 70s establishing its international corollary – sovereign equality of States and the shared responsibility of States to create a just and equitable international economic order without which it would not be possible to realize the right to development, which is as much a prerogative of nations and of States as it is of individuals.

Since 1981, various efforts have been made to formulate measures to implement the right to development, identify obstacles to its realisation, and to monitor progress. The 1990 Global Consultation, an independent expert and three separate working groups have worked tirelessly toward the same goal.

Despite these efforts, gobalization has forced the exertion of the cumulative crises onto developing countries and the poorest and most marginalized communities. In recent years, there has been an unprecedented rise in inequalities and a spectacular growth in the gap between the developed and developing countries. Between 1998 and 2002, 25% of the world's poorest saw their share of revenue decline from 1,16 % to 0,92%, whereas 10% of the world's wealthiest increased their share from 64,7 % to 71,1%. The top 20% of the richest countries account for **86%** of the world's overall gross domestic product, whereas the bottom 20% - the poorest - are left with only 1%. At the start of this week, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty asserted that "At the current rate,

it will take more than 800 years for the bottom billion of the world population to achieve 10 per cent of global income.”

If we are not to lose our credibility, we must have the courage to conduct an honest and critical evaluation of the reasons for the continued and massive violation of the right to development, as defined in the Declaration and as intended by its drafters, draw the consequences, and take collective action, in the common interest. Such an exercise is no longer an option; it is a necessity and an obligation!