

*Seminar Series on the contribution of development  
to the enjoyment of all human rights*

*(Regional meeting for Asia and the Pacific)*

*Opening Remarks by H.E. Amb. Václav Bálek  
President of Human Rights Council*

Madam Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to address you at the fifth and final regional seminar on the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights.

This series of seminars was launched in September last year. It has included events in Geneva, Beirut, Nairobi and San José, and this final seminar in Bangkok concludes the series. I always try to highlight the importance of reaching out beyond the 'Geneva bubble'. Our work is only relevant if it delivers outside of the Council's Room XX in the Palais des Nations. I am sure that your active participation today, on the other side of the world, will help us in achieving that goal.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This seminar focuses on how development contributes to all human rights. Let me share with you a few useful examples of the Council's work that will hopefully contribute to your discussions.

This seminar is mandated by the Human Rights Council's resolution 47/11, entitled "the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights". It builds upon the Council's resolutions on the same topic adopted in July 2019 and 2017.

Since 2006, the Council has also adopted annual resolutions on the right to development, building on the text of the 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development, through which the Council

established several mechanisms to help us understand the relationship and important linkages between development as a human right and other human rights.

Additionally, since 2018, the Council has adopted two resolutions on “Promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. They established a similar series of intersessional meetings for dialogue and cooperation. In my statement to the fifth intersessional meeting which was held two weeks ago, I concluded that with only seven years left to the SDG’s 2030 target date, it is time to recapture the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that called for freedom from fear and freedom from want. It is time to tackle the root causes that provoke the world multiple crisis and reignite SDG’s implementation. I believe that these calls are also relevant for your discussions over the next two days.

Let me also mention the Council’s recent recognition of the Right to Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment in resolution 48/13. The resolution provides useful guidance on integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental).

Furthermore, the reports adopted on the Universal Periodic Reviews of all 193 UN member States create a global human rights roadmap for sustainable and inclusive development. The UPR is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> Cycle, and we must continue efforts to maximize this unique peer review mechanism as a tool for sustainable development.

The Council’s Special Procedures and other mechanisms actively address related issues. At the Council’s session last September, the Expert Mechanism on the right to development presented a report on racism, racial discrimination and the right to development. The Special Rapporteur on the right to development submitted a report on the response and recovery plans and policies on the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of the right to development at the national level. I could also mention the work of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and many more.

And this year, 2023, the Human Rights Council will continue to debate sustainable development and human rights. In its upcoming 52<sup>nd</sup> Session, for example, the Council will have a Full-Day High-Level Meeting on the Right to Developments as well as interactive dialogues with relevant

mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and the Independent Expert on Foreign Debt.

All these initiatives help us to understand the relationship and important linkages between development as a human right and other human rights. Outcomes of their work are available to you, either online on the Council's website or through your direct participation on their activities. Through your engagement, we can connect the Council with your important work outside of Geneva, avoid duplications and overlaps and focus on delivering meaningful results.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

World leaders reiterated in the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations that human rights, peace and security, and development are interrelated and interdependent.

Covid-19 has devastated developmental progress and growth in economies around the world. The surge in violent conflicts in several parts of the world and related serious violations of human rights have further weakened economies and development opportunities.

What can the Council do to help? Continue to identify challenges and gaps, share good practices and experiences and ensure that we leave no one behind in combating poverty, health and climate emergencies, conflicts and war, and all forms of inequalities and discrimination.

By learning from diverse voices from around the world at events such as this one, we gain useful insights and recommendations. With this in mind, I encourage your active participation in the discussions today and wish you fruitful exchanges.

Thank you.