

Realizing a vision for transformative development

Book launch

“Realizing the Right to Development: Essays in Commemoration of 25 Years of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development”

Monday, 9 December 2013
1 – 2:45 p.m.
ECOSOC Chamber,
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Background

The twentieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action this year provides the international community with an opportunity to re-ignite the Declaration’s most salient elements. In Vienna, all Member States unequivocally reaffirmed that the right to development is a universal and inalienable human right. They agreed that to advance the realization of this right, States must cooperate to ensure development and eliminate obstacles to development. And they recognized that lasting progress in implementing the right to development requires effective development policies at the national level, and equitable economic relations and a favourable economic environment at the international level.¹

In the UN Declaration on the Right to Development of 4th December 1986,² the General Assembly enshrined and adopted a people-centred vision for a transformative development paradigm. The right to development has since been continuously and consistently reaffirmed not least in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the 2000 Millennium Declaration, the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the 2010 MDGs Review Summit, the 2011 Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2011-2020 and the outcome documents of the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII), and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012.

But there is still a long way to go to realize the commitment in the Millennium Declaration to “making the right to development a reality for everyone.” Indeed, this right entitles all people everywhere “to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social,

¹ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, A/CONF.157/23, para.10.

² GA resolution 41/128.

cultural and political development”³ and therefore calls for people-centred development; a human rights-based approach to development; active, free and meaningful participation of people in development; equity and non-discrimination; self-determination and sovereignty over natural resources. These principles can only be realized through the formulation of appropriate national and international development policies; effective international cooperation; reforms at the national and international levels; removal of obstacles to development, including human rights violations, racism, colonialism, occupation and aggression; promotion of peace and disarmament, and the redirecting of savings generated therefrom to development for individuals and peoples.

In establishing the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the General Assembly entrusted the High Commissioner with a duty to mainstream the right to development across the UN system⁴ and beyond, and to strengthen the global partnership for development⁵. All bodies and agencies of the UN are likewise expected to mainstream the right to development, and all parties in a world of multi-stakeholder governance have a role to play in realizing this right. This can only be achieved through human rights-based policy coherence, collaboration and collective action, including in the making of a post-2015 agenda for sustainable development respectful of all human rights.

As a contribution to this endeavour, the High Commissioner for Human Rights will launch a book entitled *Realizing the right to development: Essays in Commemoration of 25 Years of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development*. In her Foreword to this publication, she sets out the motivation of this project: ‘Across the globe, millions are suffering the merciless, often devastating, effects of the many global crises of our age. The global financial and economic crisis, the food crisis, the energy crisis and the climate crisis have converged in a multi-front assault on human dignity. And our institutions of governance, at both the global and national levels, have been at best negligent, and at times complicit, in this onslaught. As a result, in both North and South, the opening years of the twenty-first century have been marked by growing poverty, inequality, hunger, desperation and social unrest.’... ‘The call now...is for accountable and democratic economic and political governance under the rule of law - at both the national and international levels...’⁶

Objectives

In ‘Realizing the right to development’ OHCHR aims to advance understanding, and ultimately, realization of the right to development. The launch of this book will provide an opportunity:

- To reflect on the Declaration on the Right to Development - to explore means to realize its vision for transformative development, including through the post-2015 agenda for sustainable development;
- To explore the potential of the right to development in the management and regulation of globalization, in addressing interconnected multiple challenges, and discussing links between global regimes for trade, investment, finance, technology sharing, intellectual property, labour, climate, environment and the right to development;

³ Article 1, UN Declaration on the Right to Development.

⁴ GA resolution 48/141.

⁵ GA resolution 67/171.

⁶ Foreword by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, ‘*Realizing the Right to Development*’, Geneva, 2013.

- To identify how international cooperation can be strengthened to ensure development and eliminate obstacles to development, and facilitate discussion on global accountability including individual, collective and shared responsibilities and extra-territorial obligations of economic actors as well as global governance and reform.

Programme

The book launch will be held from 1 to 2.45 p.m. on Monday, 9 December 2013, in the ECOSOC Chamber, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay will open the meeting with an address to launch the publication. Invited speakers will then address the gathering: Ms. Tamara Kunanayakam, Chairperson, Working Group on the Right to Development; Mr. Stephen Marks, Director, Program on Human Rights in Development and François-Xavier Bagnoud Professor of Health and Human Rights, Harvard University; Ms. Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Mr. Obiora Okafor, Professor of International Law, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University; and Mr. Roberto Bissio, Executive Director, *Instituto del Tercer Mundo* (Third World Institute) and Coordinator, International Secretariat of Social Watch, Uruguay. Mr. Craig Mokhiber, Chief, Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch, OHCHR, will moderate the event. The closing address will be delivered by Mr. Thomas Pogge, Director, Global Justice Program and Leitner Professor of Philosophy and International Affairs, Yale University.

The book launch will be followed by an Author Roundtable which will take place from 3 to 6 p.m. at the same venue.

Member States, representatives from the UN system including its specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations are invited and encouraged to actively participate in a forward-looking exchange on realizing the right to development.
