

Submission in follow-up to HRC resolution 15/25 “The Right to development”

New Humanity

Since the beginning of the Working Group on RTD and of the High Level Task Force activities, New Humanity has followed with great interest the evolving debate on this subject that, from its experience, appears to be more and more crucial in increasing Human Rights effectiveness.

New Humanity would like to congratulate the Working Group for the results reached also through the important contribution offered by the High Level Task Force.

In order to give our contribution to the debate and to the work of the Working Group, New Humanity would like to propose some considerations which arise from its activities in promoting human dignity through concrete actions and theoretical research in many countries.

We take into account, from a nongovernmental point of view, both legitimate need of States to refer to a common international effort to improve the right to development as well as the legitimate need of international institutions to require every actor in global field to take their responsibility in fulfilling the right to development.

The criteria that the Task Force indicates in the Document A/HRC/15/WG.2/TF/2/Add.2 certainly exhibit a multidisciplinary approach to implementing the right to development: not only economic growth has been considered significant, but also evaluations have been done on such aspects as social justice and good governance that are the basis for a real development.

In New Humanity's point of view, a step forward could be taken in including Civil Society's perspective on the evaluation criteria for the fulfillment of the right to development, and in particular with regards to sustainability.

In the document containing the criteria, the Task Force defines the right to development as the “right of peoples and individuals to the constant improvement of their well-being and to a national and global enabling environment conducive to just, equitable, participatory and human-centered development respectful of all human rights”.

In the context of this extremely debated definition, it is important to consider that well-being could constantly improve if development includes not only an inter-generational perspective, but an intra-generational perspective.

To realize a durable development, and a constant improvement of people and individuals' well-being, development must be sustainable. What does this mean? Sustainable development means that today's well-being cannot compromise the well-being of future generations.

What is the model of well-being that the present development concept proposes? For those, like New Humanity, that work in the field and are in constant contact with the “people and individuals” who have this right to development, the perception is that it is a consumer-based model.

Unfortunately in many occasions also international aid is based on this consumer-based model, oriented to create conditions for every State to become a market able to compete in the global market.

But well-being is not just a matter of economic growth. The dignity of a simple way of living, the possibility of expressing one's attitudes, the possibility to build a family or to contribute to social growth through a job, are, in many cases, perceived as indicators of real well-being.

Therefore, to make this kind of well-being sustainable and achievable for every human person in the present and in the future, requires a wider perspective. This is also the case in defining specific tools such as criteria, sub criteria and indicators like the ones the Task Force indicate in its report.

Believing that defining a specific framework of evaluation is the proper way to sustain national and international efforts to promote the right to development and MDG 8, and considering the need to include above mentioned aspects in criteria, New Humanity suggests to include in Attribute 3 “Social justice in development.” This could be a new criterion regarding the fundamental aspect of inter-generational social justice which entails sustainability in development.

In particular, linked to this criterion, sub-criteria/indicators could be:

- Internal and international non- economic oriented activities to promote development such as education for a more equitable life-style.
- Presence of activities to reduce dependence on International Aid, such as education on active citizenship and on personal entrepreneurship.

This second sub-criterion/indicator leads us to analyze another important aspect that has to be taken into consideration: the need of confronting the temptation to present the western model as “the” model of development.

Article 1 of UDHR could give an important contribution also in identifying a more appropriate model for development. It enunciates: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

This equal dignity is recognized in the fact that our relationships cannot be based only on the economic aspects of personal (or national) benefit, but mainly on the “spirit of brotherhood”. This principle could become a real opportunity for every human society to find its own way to development, respecting its cultural awareness and offering its specific contribution to global sustainable development.

In this perspective every Nation can be considered as a “developing country”, committed to find its own contribution to the development of the whole human family through the local and personal valorization of capabilities.

In this way, fulfilling the right to development could not be done pursuing a single non sustainable model based on the economic need of new markets and new consumers, but would have to find different ways depending on the specific history, culture, traditions and expectations in each context.

With this re-orientation of the development model, the role of civil society, in collaboration with government and international institutions, must be highly considered. This is why New Humanity sustains the Task Force proposal for the right to development criteria to be included in the reporting under the Universal Periodic Review. At the moment the UPR appears to be the most inclusive and global instrument for evaluating the progress that the international community can reach in fulfilling and promoting human rights.

New Humanity hopes that the contribution of the Working Group and the High Level Task Force to the right to development and to the Human Rights Council machinery, in this period of general revision, would be to introduce into the UPR process the idea that human rights and in particular the right to development require an effort that involves global responsibility, State commitment and civil society mobilization.
