

Check against delivery



**Statement by Mr. Saad Alfaragi, United Nations Special Rapporteur on  
the right to development,**

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*Dear Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group, Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, representatives of the United Nations and the NGO community,*

It is a great pleasure and honour to be here with you today in my capacity as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to development.

As you know, the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development is still a fairly new one: The UN Human Rights Council established the mandate in 2016 and I took up this role on 1 May 2017. As a Special Rapporteur, I am part of the Human Rights Councils' Special Procedures Mechanism and required to monitor, advise and publicly report on the right to development worldwide. When establishing my mandate, the Human Rights Council emphasized the urgent need to make the right to development a reality for everyone. I was specifically mandated to contribute to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right to development in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

I would like to take the opportunity of today's meeting to provide you with an update on the activities of the mandate over the last year:

### *Thematic reports*

In accordance with resolution 33/14, I am mandated to undertake in-depth studies and submit annual thematic reports - to both the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly - on the various aspects of the right to development.

Following my 2017 vision setting report, the thematic report I submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2018 explores the connection between the right to development and equality and examines the consequences of inequalities for the enjoyment of the right to development. The report highlights that inequality within and between countries is a major obstacle to the realization of the right to development as it threatens long-term social and economic development, impedes poverty reduction, and adversely affects the ability of individuals and communities to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development. In this context, my report identifies key areas of action and provides a set of recommendations on the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right to development in the context of the implementation of the equality-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

My 2018 report to the General Assembly focuses on the link between South-South cooperation, sustainable development and the right to development. The report highlights that the internationally agreed policy outcome documents of 2015 have provided new momentum for South-South cooperation as a means to

realize the right to development and as an important complement to other forms of cooperation for achieving inclusive and sustainable development across the globe. While identifying some key challenges, the report emphasizes that South-South cooperation holds much promise for the future and its potential and positive impact could be enhanced if States and other stakeholders incorporate a right to development perspective into the design, financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of South-South cooperation processes. The report also provides some concrete examples of promising practices and innovative methods that illustrate how South-South cooperation can promote the realization of the right to development by effectively advancing sustainable development, human rights and the implementation of the 2015 policy documents.

My upcoming report to the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council will focus on the outcome of my regional consultation process and my report to the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly will focus on the right to development and disaster risk reduction. I chose to examine this topic as people across the world are increasingly exposed to natural and other disasters, the effects of which destroy development efforts and reduce entire regions to poverty. The implementation of the right to development is, therefore, closely interlinked with disaster risk reduction. Hazards cannot be fully avoided. However, disasters can -to a large extent- be averted by reducing the exposure of communities to the

hazard, increasing their capacities to withstand it and/or reducing their vulnerability.

In order to inform this report, I issued a call for submissions to collect information about challenges in effectively addressing growing disaster risk; good practices in the implementation of the right to development in the context of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and positive measures taken by States to ensure a participatory approach to the planning of disaster risk reduction measures and policies. I am pleased to have received a number of submissions and would like to encourage States and other interested stakeholders to continue submitting relevant information to my mandate.

I hope that my thematic reports are a useful advocacy tool for stakeholders at the international, regional and national levels and that they can contribute to the integration of the right to development in relevant international fora and policy dialogues. In this context, I am pleased to announce that I recently participated in the Second High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation in Argentina and that I am planning to participate in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will take place in New York in July. In the margins of the High-Level Political Forum, I am planning to organize a side event on promoting participation in national review processes on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. I look forward to engaging with Member States and civil society in this regard.



## *Country visits*

Since taking up my role as Special Rapporteur, I have also been focussing on developing a specific methodology for the conduct of country visits to assess the implementation of the right to development. I have sent requests for country visits to 20 countries and I am pleased that several countries have responded positively to my requests.

I conducted a country visit to Cabo Verde, from 12 to 21 November 2018. The visit to Cabo Verde was the first country visit that I conducted since the creation of the mandate and my appointment in 2017. The main objective of the visit was to assess the advancement of the right to development in Cabo Verde and to identify remaining challenges with a view to formulating recommendations to the Government and other stakeholders who are working towards implementing sustainable development goals. The report on that visit will be presented to the Human Right Council in September 2019. I would like to express my gratitude to the Government for its excellent cooperation and to the civil society organizations, academics and other stakeholders for their valuable input.

In terms of upcoming country visits, I am hoping to conduct country visits to Switzerland and Chile in 2019. I also encourage those States that have not yet responded positively to my visit requests to do so.

### *Regional consultations*

In September 2017, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 36/9, which requested me to hold regional consultations on the implementation of the right to development. In light of this mandate, I have convened a series of regional consultations for stakeholders from the African Group; the Western European and Other States and the Eastern European Group; the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; and the Asia-Pacific Group. The consultations took place in Addis Ababa, Geneva, Panama City, and Bangkok between March and December 2018.

One important way of contributing to the practical implementation of the right to development is to identify, exchange and promote good practices in the operationalization of the right to development at local, regional and international levels. I therefore decided to focus these regional consultations on good practices in designing, implementing, monitoring and assessing policies and programmes that contribute to the realization of the right to development in various regions. To this end, the consultations gathered representatives of Member States from the respective region, as well as representatives of United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, academia, development practitioners, civil society and the private sector.



I recently concluded the consultation process with an expert meeting, which took place in Dakar earlier this month. I am now working on consolidating the outcomes of the consultations and would like to take the opportunity of this interactive dialogue to briefly highlight some of the key elements that were raised throughout the consultations:

One of the overarching issues that was consistently raised in all regional consultations concerns the difficulties in ensuring active, meaningful and informed participation of all stakeholders in development processes at the local, national, regional and international levels. Participants highlighted that -since the right to development entitles all persons and peoples to “participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development”- a key task is to ensure inclusiveness and effective participation of relevant stakeholders at all levels of decision-making. Enabling disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups to actively participate in decision-making processes is essential to overcome structural inequalities and discrimination; to ensure their place as key actors in the development of countries; and to ensure the equal sharing of benefits. Some of the other overarching issues raised in the consultations relate to access to adequate information; means of implementation and the mobilization of existing resources; monitoring and evaluation methods; accountability mechanisms; and access to remedies.

My aim is to use the outcomes of the regional consultations to develop a set of practical guidelines and recommendations on the design, implementation and assessment of policies and programmes advancing the right to development. In order to promote a participatory approach, I am planning to share the outcome document of the consultation process for comments so as to enable all relevant stakeholders to contribute to the development of the guidelines. The document will be made available shortly on the website of my mandate and will be open for comments until the end of May.

Drawing from the discussions held during the regional consultations, some of the key elements that will be included in these guidelines include the promotion of active, meaningful and informed participation in development processes; good practices with regard to monitoring and evaluation; the promotion of accountability and access to remedies; and innovative ways to fund development and mobilize existing resources.

As mentioned, I am planning to present the guidelines to the Human Rights Council in September this year. I hope that they can provide a useful resource for the members of this Working Group, including with regard to the discussions on the elaboration of a draft legally binding instrument on the right to development.

### *Cooperation with the Working Group on the Right to Development*

As you are aware, the Resolution establishing my mandate requires me to contribute to the work of this Working Group “with a view to supporting the accomplishment of its overall mandate, taking into account, inter alia, the deliberations and recommendations of the Working Group, while avoiding any duplication”. I am therefore pleased to be able to participate, for the second time, in a session of the Working Group and I look forward to actively engaging with all of you today and on future occasions. I also wish to underline that I am open for your suggestions and advice on how I can best carry out my mandate to support the work of the Working Group and on how we can ensure that our cooperation is a good example of synergies in the work of Special procedures and other mechanisms.

*I thank you for your attention and I am looking forward to a fruitful debate.*

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