

The 25th session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development

Statement by Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

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14 May 2024, Geneva

Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group,
Special Rapporteur on the right to development,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues and friends,

It is an honor to address you on this occasion on behalf of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development. First, I would like to congratulate the Working Group and Ambassador Akram for his leadership in chairing and concluding the negotiation over the draft text of the Covenant on the Right to Development, which was presented to the Human Rights Council.

Allow me to take this opportunity to give a quick overview of the work of the EMRTD in the past year.

As we embarked on our second mandate of three years, the Expert Mechanism initiated a series of new thematic studies, guided by inputs from Member States, civil society representatives and various stakeholders. Notably, during the eighth session of the EMRTD last October, here in Geneva, we conducted a consultation that yielded excellent suggestions and advice. Among these was a request for a study on the individual and collective dimensions of the right to development. In response, the Mechanism promptly initiated the study, which is now well underway. Besides this one, we have two other studies that are actively soliciting inputs, with an emphasis on identifying good practices. These are: “Women’s active, free and meaningful participation in development, with emphasis on decision-making”, and “Right to Development in International Development Cooperation”. We also have another three ongoing studies: “Climate Finance: Vulnerability and Responsibility”, “Climate Justice, Sustainability, and the Right to Development”, and “Artificial Intelligence, Regulation, and the Right to Development” – they will also be finalized before the end of our second mandate in 2026.

Recently, at our ninth session, held in New York just a couple of weeks ago, we had the privilege of engaging in enriching dialogues with a diverse spectrum of participants, including Member States, representatives from civil society and major groups, and other stakeholders. The presence of distinguished Ambassadors from various Permanent Missions, along with experts from both within and outside the UN, enriched our discussions with great insights, perspectives, and experiences.

I would like to share some quick takeaways from these discussions:

- We underscored the critical importance of global agreements, whether voluntary or legally binding, in rallying collective commitment and action to tackle pressing global challenges. The negotiation of these global agreements needs to be grounded in trust-building and inclusion principles; and their implementation needs to be based on shared but differentiated responsibilities. Resource mobilization and capacity-building in developing countries are urgently needed ensure inclusive and equitable participation in negotiation and decision-making.
- In international development cooperation, whether between developing and developed countries or between developing countries themselves, North-South, South-South, Triangular, or other modalities, the normative principles of the right to development, i.e. development is a human right and development cooperation is an obligation of all States, can be systematically integrated to enhance their effectiveness. Successful development cooperation involves respecting national policy space, fostering innovation, strengthening national capacity, and leveraging UN system globally and in country. Discussions must be cognizant of the realities of developing countries.
- We affirmed that climate financing represents an additional component rather than a substitute for development financing. The potential or relevance of new and emerging climate financing tools should not distract us from the focus on reforming the global economic system, including the international financial architecture. Addressing historical accountability for emissions remains paramount. Crucially, we emphasized that human rights must remain central to the discourse on the climate crisis, with climate financing intrinsically linked to the concept of a just transition.
- Addressing cross-cutting issues, we emphasized the imperative for cooperation and a global commitment to equal opportunities and innovative partnerships to bridge the digital divide. Furthermore, we underscored the importance of women's active, free, and meaningful participation in development, highlighting the need to

address the care burden affecting women and reduce social and gender inequalities. Effective and meaningful participation of all right holders, including local communities, women, youth, and others, is essential, reflecting the fundamental principle of the right to development. Lastly, our pursuit of development for the current generation needs to respect the rights of future generations.

We recognize the imperative to harmonize various global agendas and reaffirm our commitment to assisting Member States in fulfilling their obligations to the right to development. We remain steadfast in providing tangible contributions to support Member States in their negotiation and implementation of these agendas. Our collective goal is to drive progress toward realizing the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda and ensuring the universal realization of the right to development.

Distinguished representatives,

It has been a challenging year in terms of the organization of our work, due to the uncertainty surrounding the UN regular budget. Our travel to conduct study visits and engage in international conferences has been curtailed. Our ninth session in New York was reduced from three days to two, which understandably elicited concerns from delegations. Last year at our eighth session in Geneva, we couldn't have the Chair-Rapporteur and the Special Rapporteur present in person for our coordination meeting, as was the practice during previous years. We are thankful that they were able to send us video-messages. So we appreciate even more the opportunity to join this interactive dialogue today.

Despite these setbacks, we have tried our best to advance our work. We recently held a meeting with the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, where all members were present. We exchanged the direction of our work and identified areas for future collaboration. We also had an extensive online meeting with the Special Rapporteur and had a very fruitful exchange, exploring various avenues for not only coordination, but also concrete collaboration. We look forward to opportunities to further deepen and enhance our collaborative efforts.

Thank you.