

35TH ANNIVERSARY RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT
Human Rights Council
Videorecorded message
Rebeca Grynspan, UNCTAD Secretary General

Your excellency, Chair, Mr. Muhammadou Kah, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council

Your Excellency, UN Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammed,

Your Excellency, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk
Excellencies, dear delegates, Distinguished colleagues,

Dear friends:

The great Mexican poet, Octavio Paz, once said: “la Libertad no se define – se ejerce”. Freedom is not a definition, it is an exercise.

Today, thirty-five (35) years after the groundbreaking declaration to the Right to development, we are called to reflect on the wisdom of these words.

The Right to Development is not just a theoretical concept, a recognition of a universal human truth; it is, above all, a call to action.

It is a reminder that development is not only an end in itself, but also a means to an end. The end is the realization of the full potential of every person within every nation.

It is about creating an environment in which people can live with dignity and respect, free from poverty, hunger, disease, and oppression – a world where, as the Declaration says in Article 1, “all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized”.

As we celebrate the thirty-fifth (35th) anniversary of this grand declaration, we must recognize that the Right to Development is still not a reality for far too many people around the world.

Too many people still lack access to basic education, healthcare, clean water and sanitation and economic opportunities.

Too many people still suffer from discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion.

And today, we see with deep concern the rise in hunger and poverty...

The current context of cascading crises that engulf us has exposed just how unequal, and therefore vulnerable, we still are.

It has shown that development cannot be achieved without addressing its root causes.

Otherwise, we may lose, as we lost during COVID, ten, twenty years of development, in the span of just a few months.

But these cascading crises have shown us another thing also.

The truth, enshrined in the second article of this Declaration, that “all human beings have a responsibility for development, individually and collectively”.

Only if we all fulfil this duty, will the right to development be truly realized.

In this solemn occasion, we must remind ourselves that we must do more, much more, to bring down the obstacles to development that still surround us.

Persistent asymmetries in the international financial architecture and in the trade system, widening digital gap, an unfinished environmental governance and a weak social contract. Only together, can we bring these obstacles down.

This means investing in people, in their skills, their health, and their well-being.

This means sharing technologies and resources.

It means facing the future and its challenges together, especially in the fight against environmental degradation and climate change.

It means creating an enabling environment for institutions to take root, for the active, free and meaningful participation of all in development, in

economic growth and job creation, leaving no one behind: especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

It means “promoting, encouraging and strengthening human rights and fundamental freedoms for all”.

Your excellencies,

In conclusion, let us remember that the Right to Development is not a gift that can be bestowed upon us by others.

It is a right that we must claim, return, and exercise ourselves.

Let us renew our commitment to this noble cause and work together to build a better future for all. Thank you.