

## INFORMATION NOTE

### The Right to Development and International Cooperation

#### Global Challenges Require Global Solutions

Today, the international community is faced with ever-increasing global challenges to economic, social, cultural and political development. These include: financial and economic crises, unemployment, climate change, displacement of peoples, and other global problems which require a comprehensive, multilateral and multi-stakeholder response. Fortunately, we possess the means to address these crises if States act in the spirit of solidarity and in accordance with their human rights obligations. Rapid advances in information, communication, and transportation technologies have led to speedy movement of information, goods and services. Economies and societies are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. This can lead to shared crises but also creates opportunities for shared solutions.

In 2015, the international community agreed on the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. These agreements require international cooperation to address global problems. They are integrally linked to, and informed by human rights, including the right to development. For example, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda contains a new Technology Facilitation Mechanism that reflects the commitment of States to collaborate in formulating international development policies which are also the focus of Article 4(1) of the 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development. Sustainable Development Goal 17 on revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development reflects the vision of cooperation for development contained in Article 3 of the Declaration on the Right to Development. Further operationalizing these commitments will promote both the realization of the right to development and internationally agreed development objectives.

As the world moves forward with these new global arrangements, the landscape of international cooperation is also evolving, with a combination of North-South, South-South, triangular, and other forms of cooperation and exchange. The private sector is also emerging as a key partner through multi-stakeholder and public-private partnerships. It is therefore critical that States hold businesses accountable for their actions and that businesses respect human rights in line with their responsibilities outlined in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

#### International Obligations: Cooperation for Development, Human Rights and Peace

Achieving international co-operation to solve international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all is one of the purposes of the United Nations, articulated in Article 1(3) of the UN Charter. Under Articles 2, 55 and 56, all Member States bear certain obligations to be carried out both individually and collectively, in the promotion of peace, human rights and development, the three pillars of the organization. Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights entitles everyone to a “social and international order in which “all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realized.” The Declaration on the Right to Development provides an essential guide to the manner in which States, the international community and all organs of society must act and cooperate to ensure an enabling environment for development that is sustainable, just, equitable and inclusive.

The Declaration on the Right to Development recognizes that the right to development cannot be realized, nor can all States fulfil their responsibilities, without effective cooperation among States. To this end, it imposes on States and the international community, a duty to cooperate to achieve its transformative vision. Article 3 articulates the key obligations of States in the creation of national and international conditions favourable to realizing the right to development. These include: full respect for the principles of international law on friendly relations and cooperation among States; cooperation to ensure development and eliminate obstacles to development; and promotion of an international economic order based on sovereign equality, interdependence, mutual interest and cooperation among all States. Article 4 calls on States to take steps, individually and collectively, to formulate international development policies to facilitate the full realization of the right to development, sustained action for more rapid development of developing countries, and effective international co-operation to provide developing countries with appropriate means and facilities to foster their development.

### **Moving Forward: The commitment to cooperate must be operationalized**

The right to development requires that international and transnational efforts to address, inter alia, trade and investment, science, technology and innovation, intellectual property, climate change, financing development and development itself be addressed comprehensively and coherently with the ultimate policy objective of ensuring freedom from fear and freedom from want for all people without discrimination. The Declaration provides a framework for the consideration of extraterritorial obligations and the obligations of States in their collective capacities, including as members of international organizations and as actors in global trade, investment, and finance. In keeping with the spirit of the Declaration, aid, international lending and climate financing, should be adequate, effective and transparent, administered through participatory and accountable processes, and targeted towards the most vulnerable – whether countries, peoples, groups or individuals most in need, including within those States where the ability to mobilize domestic resources is weakest. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change calls for States to protect future generations and to take action on climate change "on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities". While climate change affects people everywhere, those who have contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions (i.e. the poor, children, indigenous peoples, and future generations) are those most affected. Equity in climate action requires that efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change should benefit people living in developing countries, indigenous peoples, people in vulnerable situations, and future generations.

An enabling environment for development requires equitable, participatory, transparent and accountable institutions of global governance. International financial institutions and multilateral banks, regional associations and other actors that facilitate the collective action of States are key players in international development. To realize the right to development, States must ensure that their collective actions through international institutions contribute to the creation of an international enabling environment for development and for human rights.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and all other actions in the development sphere should be guided by the right to development and its mandate for international cooperation, mutual accountability and shared responsibilities by all organs of society, including the private sector. International solidarity, cooperation, and capacity building are essential to building a just, secure and peaceful world for all.

*During the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development in 2016, the United Nations Human Rights office seeks to raise awareness, enhance understanding and promote dialogue on the right to development. For more information including the text of the Declaration, please visit:*

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/DevelopmentIndex.aspx>

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