



**SOUTH
CENTRE**

**UN Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Right to Development
Interactive dialogue with experts
on the implementation and realization of the right to development
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**Statement
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Thank you very much for inviting the South Centre to be part of this panel.

Congratulations, Ambassador Zamir Akram, on your reappointment as the Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Right to Development. We look forward to continuing to work with you in this working group.

We welcome the decision of the Human Rights Council on the establishment of a mandate for a special rapporteur on the right to development last September 2016, and we look forward to support the work of H.E. Saad Alfarargi of Egypt as the newly appointed Special Rapporteur who will commence his work on 1st May 2017

The 1986 Vienna Declaration on the Right to Development, whose 30th anniversary we celebrated last year, reminds us that the right is about every person, and all peoples in all countries, being entitled to achieve and enjoy the fruits of development.

While it rightly states that States are responsible in the first place for ensuring that national development takes place, equally important is its emphasis on the duty of all States to cooperate in order to achieve the right to development for all peoples.

But never has the achievement of the right to development been more under threat. Let me list down four of these development challenges.

1. The global economy continues to be in crisis. Weak economies in developed countries with uncertain recovery from the 2008 financial crisis, coupled with austerity; the end of the commodity price boom; volatility in capital flows (especially in developing countries) leading to net capital outflows from developing countries; an impending debt crisis, for some already there, for many countries in Africa and Latin America, compounded by the lack of an international sovereign debt workout mechanism; slowing growth rates in many countries; the stagnation on international trade; uncertainty in forthcoming economic policies among some major economies.

2. Climate change has become an existential threat. The Paris Agreement, while a global achievement showing that the global community can agree when faced with a grave threat, but it not ambitious enough, does not jumpstart effective action on finance and technology transfers to developing countries, and remains only the start of what will need to be much greater levels of international action on climate change. Even that, now, is uncertain. To meet either the 2C or 1.5C temperature limits in the Paris Agreement, we only have a couple of decades at most before both limits become out of reach, and catastrophic and irreversible climate change would then be upon us. The impact of unmitigated climate change, or the inability to adapt and respond to such impacts, could lead to massive development declines, food security challenges, natural resource endowment disruptions, in many countries (especially developing countries, most of whom are those that are particularly vulnerable to such impacts).
3. The threat of new global pandemics is increasing. Many diseases, especially those caused by microbes, are becoming more difficult to treat because the bacteria have become more resistant to the antibacterial drugs that we use. Some have become resistant to all antibiotics. There needs to be much greater action on surveillance, the reduce of overuse, wrong use, and unethical marketing of antibiotics for both humans and animals, as well as supporting R&D and ensuring access through funds and technologies to new antibiotics particularly for developing countries.
4. The advent of automation and the increasing use of digital technologies in productive economic sectors could have socially and economically disruptive effects, unless adequately prepared for. Worse, it is the developing countries that are estimated to lose the most, and this will exacerbate the already great global inequalities, due to premature deindustrialization (manufacturing becomes less labour intensive as labor is replaced by capital); relocalization of manufacturing production back in developed markets as cheap labour no longer becomes an attractive force; and the lack of social safety nets make it difficult for developing countries to absorb the unemployment that may result.

But these challenges are all human-caused, arising from how we view the world, how the actors in the global community interact with each other. This means that the solutions also lie within us.

This emphasizes the aspect of international cooperation as a key element for the right to development, particularly in addressing the structural and systemic imbalances, inequalities, and challenges in the existing international order that impede countries from fully achieving their right to development, and which could make it more difficult for countries, especially developing countries, to surmount their development challenges. These include, for example, imbalances in the international trade system, the international financial system, in international debt and the lack of a sovereign debt workout mechanism, in international investment policy, in international tax cooperation, in the sharing of natural resources, in access to medicines and health, in technology development, innovation, and access policies, in North-South relationships in many areas.

International cooperation is also at the heart of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One sees this in virtually all of the SDGs but, more importantly, in SDG 17 which talks about enhancing global cooperation on trade, finance, technology, global governance, and other areas of international cooperation for ensuring that the means of implementation are provided to all countries, particularly developing countries, to enable them to achieve the SDGs, in particular Goal 1 on ending poverty; Goal 2 on ending hunger and achieving food security; Goal 3 on ensuring healthy lives; Goal 5 on achieving gender equality; Goal 9 on fostering industrialization and innovation; and Goal 14 on natural resource conservation and protection; and, in that context, contribute to the achievement of their right to development. These goals are the focus of the upcoming HLPF on Sustainable Development that will take place this July 2017.

In this context, to end, the right to development and the SDGs are part of this long-standing global discourse on how to ensure that all human beings, and all peoples in all countries, are able to have decent and dignified standards of living that give them economic opportunities for livelihood and hope for the future for themselves and their children.

This working group, and the HLPF this July, can contribute to this discourse by looking at what needs to be done in linking, developing and enhancing coherent, strategic, and effective international cooperation on all of the challenges that I have described, so that the systemic and structural international policy, global governance, and economic imbalances and inequalities that lie at the root of such development challenges are addressed and remedied.