

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to development and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

The right to development and economic, social and cultural rights: Reinforcing the nexus

13 May 2024, 1:15-2:15pm
XXIV, Palais des Nations, Geneva
(In person event only)

The United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights provide a common foundation for both the right to development and economic, social, and cultural rights. For example, Article 55 of the Charter provides that the United Nations shall promote ‘higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development’ as well as ‘universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all’.

Similarly, the UDHR affirms the inherent dignity and worth of human beings and encapsulates a range human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article 22 of the UDHR declares: ‘Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.’

The content of these rights is elaborated further in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Declaration on the Right to Development. Although all human rights are affirmed to be universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated, the world community has not paid equal attention to the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights or the right to development. This is evident from the continued poverty, inequality, hunger, unaffordable housing, limited access to water and sanitation, and environmental pollution. Moreover, as highlighted by the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Report, we are seriously offtrack to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Many developing countries are also struggling to mobilise finance for development, including due to facing an unprecedented debt crisis.

As the world is grappling with conflicts and climate change and States are negotiating the Pact for the Future, it is timely to revisit the prevailing economic model and the current international financial architecture. A holistic understanding of the right to development can underpin a transformative shift needed in the current economic order to overcome the current challenges and achieve accelerated progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development in his recent vision report ([A/HRC/54/27](#)) to the Human Rights Council articulated a new model of ‘planet-centred

participatory development'. The OHCHR is similarly promoting the importance of a human rights economy, which entails taking all human rights – including economic, social and cultural rights – seriously in all aspects of the global economy.

Against this backdrop, the UN Special Rapporteur and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will co-organise a side event to discuss the nexus between the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.

Aims

The side event seeks to:

1. Underscore the mutually reinforcing relation between the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights;
2. Highlight the value addition provided by the right to development in ensuring a dignified life for everyone everywhere and thus leave no one behind;
3. Showcase good practices in implementing economic, social and cultural rights and in turn contributing to the realisation of the right to development; and
4. Examine the relevance of the right to development as well as economic, social and cultural rights for the Pact for the Future.

Questions for discussions

- What are the common elements flowing from the ICESCR and the Declaration on the Right to Development?
- What unique value does the right to development add to the implementation of the ICESCR?
- What challenges do States face in realising economic, social and cultural rights as well as the right to development? How could these challenges be overcome?
- Why should the right to development as well as economic, social and cultural rights be central to the Pact for the Future and the human rights economy?
- How can the implementation of the right to development support the principle of 'leaving no one behind'?

Moderator

Wan Hea-Lee, Chief, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Section, Treaty Bodies, OHCHR

Panellists

1. Mr Todd Howland, Chief of the Development, Economic, and Social Rights Branch, OHCHR
2. Mr Surya Deva, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development
3. PR of a member state (tbc)
4. Amnesty International ESCR team / APG23

Registration

Kindly complete the registration form for the side event [here](#).

Contacts

If you have any questions about this side event, please contact Ms Antoanela Pavlova (antoanela.pavlova@un.org) or hrc-sr-development@un.org) or Chafik Ben Rouin

chafik.benrouin@un.org>) at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva.