

# **The fourth session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development Statement by Mr. Koen De Feyter**

**Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development  
3 November 2021**

Distinguished delegates,  
Dear friends and colleagues,

I am greatly honoured to chair the fourth session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development and preside over our inter-sessional activities.

While taking the chairmanship of the Mechanism, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my colleague and predecessor, Ms. Klentiana Mahmutaj, for her leadership as chair in the last months.

As you know, our mandate was established in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. Since, the pandemic has evolved in a way that has allowed us, the five members of the Expert Mechanism, now to meet in person for the first time in Geneva, albeit if in a hybrid session. We are pleased for the opportunity to meet delegates, colleagues and friends who attend in person and welcome with appreciation the participation of all those who are and will be following the discussions virtually.

I would like to thank Mr. Ayuush Bat-Erdene for his words and for highlighting the work carried out so far by the Expert Mechanism. The work on the right to development is relevant now more than ever. Just last month, while announcing the United Nations Common Agenda, the Secretary General unequivocally recognized the need for renewed solidarity between peoples and future generations and the necessity for a new social contract that is rooted in human rights.

The Secretary General presented a vision of global cooperation through an inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism.

The right to development *is* the framework that brings together all these elements. The very nature of development as a human right means that development cannot be realized when there are violations of other human rights. Furthermore, the right to development recognizes human beings as holders of rights, both individually and collectively, and it entails three levels of duties for States, namely States acting: collectively, individually and beyond their jurisdiction.

Solidarity and the duty to cooperate are at the very heart of the right to development. The duty to cooperate engages the responsibility of States to eliminate existing obstacles to development, to not create new obstacles and to positively foster policies that promote the realization of the right to development for all. In this context, the duty to cooperate is not limited to collective actions taken by States at international organizations or in other global or regional partnerships, but also necessarily includes the obligation to refrain from adopting national policies that impair or nullify the right to development of those not strictly within their jurisdiction.

Distinguished delegates,

As highlighted by the Secretary General, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed existing fault lines in global solidarity and international cooperation and has accelerated the lack and delay in attaining the 2030 Agenda. There has never been a more urgent need for operationalizing the right to development through fulfilment by States of their duty to cooperate.

I am confident that our discussions during these three days will make a meaningful contribution to the greater goal of implementing the right to development worldwide.

Thank you for your attention.

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