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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the  
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Consolidated report of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the right to development**

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## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 48/141, in which the General Assembly established the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Assembly decided that one of the responsibilities of the High Commissioner would be to promote and protect the realization of the right to development and to enhance support from relevant bodies of the United Nations system for that purpose.

2. In its resolution 66/155, the General Assembly reaffirmed its request to the High Commissioner, in mainstreaming the right to development, to undertake effectively activities aimed at strengthening the global partnership for development among Member States, development agencies and the international development, financial and trade institutions, and to reflect those activities in detail in her next report to the Human Rights Council.

3. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 19/34, requested the Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) to continue to submit to the Council an annual report on its activities, including on inter-agency coordination within the United Nations system with regard to the promotion and realization of the right to development. Similarly, the General Assembly, in its resolution 66/155, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session and an interim report to the Council on the implementation of resolution 66/155, including efforts made at the national, regional and international levels in the promotion and realization of the right to development.

4. The present report is submitted in accordance with the above-mentioned requests and provides information on the activities undertaken by OHCHR in the period from December 2011 to June 2012. It supplements the report of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner on the right to development submitted to the Council at its nineteenth session (A/HRC/19/45).

## II. Activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights relating to the promotion and realization of the right to development

5. The programme of OHCHR on the promotion and realization of the right to development is set out in programme 19 of the strategic framework for the period 2012-2013 and guided by a multidimensional strategy in accordance with the Declaration on the Right to Development, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Millennium Declaration and other relevant instruments, as well as by the above-mentioned mandates of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. The implementation of this policy framework is undertaken within the framework of the OHCHR Management Plan for 2012-2013: Working for results.<sup>1</sup>

6. The promotion and effective realization of the right to development remain a key objective of OHCHR that is fully supported by the Office's thematic strategies. The thematic strategy in which the right to development is situated seeks to combat poverty and increase the integration of human rights standards and principles into the policies of the United Nations system at the national and international levels. In addition to the support

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<sup>1</sup> See OHCHR Report 2011, available from [www2.ohchr.org/english/ohchrreport2011/web\\_version/ohchr\\_report2011\\_web/index.html](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/ohchrreport2011/web_version/ohchr_report2011_web/index.html).

given to the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council in their work on the right to development, the Office builds on the momentum gathered during the commemoration in 2011 of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development to mobilize broader support for human rights-based policy coherence in strengthening the global partnership for development.

## **A. Advocacy, outreach and communications**

7. Realizing the right to development of persons with disabilities requires the adoption of a human rights-based approach to disability that respects their active, free and meaningful participation in development, the fair distribution of resulting benefits, and their inclusion in society on an equal basis with others. This also requires a twin-track approach to development. The rights of persons with disabilities must be mainstreamed into development programmes in general. This includes both action at the national level and support through international cooperation, as specifically recognized in article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. During the period under review, OHCHR published an information note on the right to development of persons with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>

8. In a letter addressed to the President of the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), held in Doha in April 2012, the High Commissioner stated that human rights, including the right to development, can help fortify and reinforce development-centred globalization, the theme of the session. She underlined the fact that development would be inclusive and sustainable only when those who tend to be excluded have full participation in development. There was a need to allow for policy space for the concerns of poor, vulnerable and marginalized individuals and groups, and to give them a voice. The human rights framework, and, in particular, the Declaration on the Right to Development, presented a development paradigm aimed at the improved well-being of all people, including through free, active and meaningful participation in development; the equitable distribution of the benefits of development, and the promotion of an equitable international order in which all human rights can be realized. Shared responsibilities, human rights-based policy coherence and systemic integration could strengthen further the global partnership for development.<sup>3</sup>

9. In April 2012, the High Commissioner addressed a letter to all Permanent Missions in Geneva concerning the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).<sup>4</sup> The High Commissioner called upon all Member States to integrate key human rights considerations fully into the outcome document. Member States should commit to ensuring full coherence between efforts to advance the green economy, on the one hand, and their solemn human rights obligations, on the other. They should recognize that all policies and measures adopted to advance sustainable development must be firmly grounded in, and respectful of, all internationally agreed human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development. To those ends, all actors, in both public and private sectors, should exercise due diligence, including through the use of human rights impact assessments. Particular care must be taken to prevent and remedy any negative impact on the human rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples, minorities, migrants, persons living in poverty, older persons, persons with disabilities and children. The empowerment of women, the protection of their rights and

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.OHCHR.org/Documents/Issues/Development/Information\\_note\\_RTD\\_Disability.pdf](http://www.OHCHR.org/Documents/Issues/Development/Information_note_RTD_Disability.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Development/HCLetterUNCTADXIII.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Development/HCLetterUNCTADXIII.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> See [www.OHCHR.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/WantedHumanRightsinRio.aspx](http://www.OHCHR.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/WantedHumanRightsinRio.aspx).

their meaningful participation in decision-making must be assured. States should resolve to work to advance a human rights-based approach to the green economy, based on the principles of participation, accountability at both the national and international levels, non-discrimination, empowerment and the rule of law, and to pursue a model of economic growth that is socially and environmentally sustainable, just and equitable, and respectful of all human rights.

10. In the period under review, new web stories were reported and widely disseminated by OHCHR through social media and on the Internet. Themes included Rio+20 and human rights on social media; human rights and development at the centre of globalization; human rights in Rio; and people-centred development in the context of the “Arab Spring”.<sup>5</sup>

## **B. Events and initiatives**

11. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development provided the international community with an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned, achievements made and the potential of the right to development to help address contemporary global challenges in an increasingly interdependent and globalized world. The anniversary inspired an unprecedented amount of initiatives and activities by stakeholders, international organizations, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society. OHCHR organized 13 international events, including seminars, workshops, and panel and roundtable discussions, and developed and disseminated three new information notes and a video, including on social media platforms. Some 20 public statements were made in support of the right to development. Many of the discussions echoed the four key messages that the High Commissioner emphasized at the launch of the anniversary year: the right to development is a fundamental human right; the right to development belongs to everyone, without discrimination; the right to development is as relevant today as it was on the day the Declaration was adopted; and that we must act together in a determined and coherent manner in order to realize the right to development.<sup>6</sup>

12. In December 2011, OHCHR organized in New York an expert roundtable in commemoration of the anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development on the theme “People at the centre: human rights in global economics and development”, opened by Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz.<sup>7</sup> The discussion highlighted the need to pay serious attention to human rights-based approaches, with a focus on active, free and meaningful participation, higher levels of accountability, non-discrimination and attention to vulnerability, the political and economic empowerment of people, fair distribution and an explicit linkage to international human rights norms and standards, as well as effective international cooperation in support of the right to development.

13. The Non-Aligned Movement, in cooperation with OHCHR, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Nord-Sud XXI, organized a panel discussion in December 2011 on the theme “The relevance of the right to development in the context of global challenges”.<sup>8</sup> The meeting underlined the current relevance of the Declaration on the Right to Development, the importance of renewing political commitment to its realization and overcoming the political impasse, in particular in the light of the popular uprisings in the Middle East and

<sup>5</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/FeatureStories.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/FeatureStories.aspx).

<sup>6</sup> A/HRC/19/45, para. 22.

<sup>7</sup> See [www.OHCHR.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/PeopleAtTheCentre.aspx](http://www.OHCHR.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/PeopleAtTheCentre.aspx).

<sup>8</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/ApaneldiscussionNAMincooperationwithOHCHR.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/ApaneldiscussionNAMincooperationwithOHCHR.aspx).

North Africa. Participants in the discussions also stressed the need to mainstream the right to development and human rights-based thinking into development policymaking, to move to an empirical framework and towards development-centred globalization.

14. In December 2011, OHCHR gave a presentation on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development at an event organized jointly by the Australian Council for International Development and the United Nations Information Centre in Canberra. The OHCHR representative highlighted the topicality of the Declaration and the need to analyse the economic crises from that perspective. She pointed to the need to include human rights considerations when assessing progress in development, and drew particular attention to the challenges for realizing the right to development in the Pacific.

15. The global commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development included a statement made by the Secretary-General,<sup>9</sup> who called on world leaders to respond to the demands of people who seek to build their own future.<sup>10</sup>

16. The second seminar on the promotion and strengthening of the rights of people of African descent in Central America, organized by OHCHR in February 2012, devoted a day to a discussion on the issue of people of African descent and the right to development. During the discussion, ideas were exchanged on how to integrate a human rights-based approach to development for people of African descent in Central America and the Caribbean.

17. In March 2012, the Office organized a lecture on the right to development for professors and students of universities in the Russian Federation, who visited OHCHR within the framework of the human rights orientation programme of the OHCHR Human Rights Masters Programme. This is an example of numerous presentations, briefings and lectures that OHCHR continues to deliver at civil society gatherings, academic institutions and universities and to the general public on the right to development.

18. In March 2012, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights participated in the special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and UNCTAD on the theme “Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of financing for development”. Attention was drawn to the human rights dimension of this issue. Participants in the meeting stated that human rights establish minimum standards and provide criteria for prioritizing. Human rights policy coherence was therefore particularly important, for States as much as for the United Nations and other international actors, to ensure a credible and coherent response to economic and social challenges, with human rights as the baseline and yardstick.

19. OHCHR co-sponsored a side event during the special high-level meeting on the theme “People-centred development: creating an enabling environment for productive investment and decent jobs”. Attention was particularly drawn to the need to avoid social disruption as a result of budget cuts to the detriment of human rights, to the need to shift macroeconomic policies towards people-centred development, and to assess economic policy using the ethical lens of human rights standards. The Office placed a web-story on that occasion on its website.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/DevelopmentIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/DevelopmentIndex.aspx).

<sup>10</sup> See also [www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40608&Cr=sustainable+development&Cr1=](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40608&Cr=sustainable+development&Cr1=).

<sup>11</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/People-centredDevelopmentWhattheArabSpringtaughtus.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/People-centredDevelopmentWhattheArabSpringtaughtus.aspx).

20. The International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions held a panel discussion in March 2012 on national human rights institutions and the right to development. The main purpose of the discussion was to give the institutions the chance to exchange information and experiences on their activities at the national level on the right to development, and also to hear from relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms on their experience. Presentations were made by the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the national human rights institutions of Cameroon, Nicaragua and Thailand.

21. In March 2012, the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan organized a two-day training workshop for civil society organizations on human rights and the role of such organizations in the realization of the South Sudan Development Plan. The scope of the discussion was based on, inter alia, the definition of development as included in the Declaration on the Right to Development. The three-year plan of the Mission aims at achieving security, development, economic growth and the reduction of poverty. Participants were trained on skills, techniques and approaches to monitoring the developmental goals spelled out in the Plan. Participants also learned how to work with other partners in South Sudan to promote the right to development. Participants in the workshop also looked at the role of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary in promoting and protecting the right to development and at the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights as laid out in the transitional Constitution of South Sudan.

22. OHCHR provided inputs to a number of events, such as a panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming and international cooperation organized during the nineteenth session of the Human Rights Council<sup>12</sup> and the high-profile panel discussion hosted by the High Commissioner on International Women's Day, on the theme "Capitalizing on women's potential in times of crisis".

23. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, during her visit to the Solomon Islands in March 2012, urged the Government and the country's development partners to launch specific programmes targeting women and their right to development and the right to a life free from violence.<sup>13</sup> The mission was underpinned by the recognition of the ongoing challenges faced by the Solomon Islands in overcoming poverty and underdevelopment, as well as the efforts made by the Government, together with its development partners, to achieve this important goal.

24. OHCHR provided secretariat support to the Open-ended Working Group on the Right to Development, which convened its thirteenth session in Geneva from 7 to 11 May 2012. At the session, the Working Group focused on a first reading of the criteria proposed by the high-level task force, collecting views thereon or on refinements to the proposed criteria, as well as proposals for additional criteria. The High Commissioner opened the session and underlined the fact that justice, dignity and freedom from fear and want were central tenets of the right to development. Human rights must be regarded as indispensable assets and indeed as the foundations of a global partnership for development that aims at achieving the well-being of all people without discrimination. The full integration of the right to development into all areas of the work of the United Nations system and of international financial and trade institutions, as well as its major processes, such as the follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries), the thirteenth session of UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the development agenda

<sup>12</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11894&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11894&LangID=E).

<sup>13</sup> See [www.OHCHR.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11983&LangID=E](http://www.OHCHR.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11983&LangID=E).

beyond 2015, was important. She pointed out that the politicization, polarization and the impasse in the intergovernmental debate on the right to development had to end. A common objective should be to create a practical and operational framework for the implementation of the right to development so as to realize the potential of this right with open, sustained engagement, including through encouraging the participation and input of a wider constituency.<sup>14</sup>

25. While trade liberalization and negotiations around trade agreements are ongoing in the Pacific, the consideration of human rights in such processes and debates has been lacking. The draft guiding principles of human rights impact assessments of trade and investment agreements developed by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food<sup>15</sup> provide a new modality to support interested States with concrete technical assistance. This potentially not only brings human rights into the debate but can prevent any potential negative impact of trade agreements on the enjoyment of human rights. This is particularly important in the case of small island developing States. A number of States in the Pacific currently conducting trade-related negotiations are showing interest in human rights impact assessments as well.

26. In August 2011, OHCHR initiated a project on human rights impact assessments relating to general trade liberalization. The overall objectives of the project were to collect further information on and examples of possible areas of impact, and to advocate for the inclusion of human rights in country- and agreement-specific trade discussions. Jointly with the UNDP Pacific Centre, a more comprehensive project was developed for accession by Vanuatu to WTO. The project, which is ongoing, comprises research, mapping and the identification of areas of possible impact, as well as a planned in situ visit.

27. OHCHR continues its efforts to mainstream human rights, including the right to development, into the United Nations system, including through the United Nations Development Group human rights mainstreaming mechanism. The High-Level Committee on Programmes, at its twenty-third session, held in March 2012, agreed to include human rights policy coherence as a regular agenda item and to discuss relevant human rights themes, as and when required, and to integrate human rights more systematically into joint advocacy statements and system-wide messages of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

28. In June 2012, the High Commissioner addressed a letter to all heads of United Nations departments, bodies, funds and programmes, specialized agencies, as well as international financial and multilateral trading institutions, in an effort to identify opportunities or obstacles to the full mainstreaming of the right to development into the mandates, policies and operational programmes and activities of the respective organizations.

### III. Conclusions and recommendations

29. **During the period under review, OHCHR continued its efforts to promote the right to development by means of research, analysis, public advocacy, technical cooperation, mainstreaming and the facilitation of international dialogue. Challenges remain in the realization of the right to development, in particular, the continued politicization and polarization in intergovernmental debates. There is a need to enlarge the constituencies in support of the right to development and to ensure human**

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<sup>14</sup> See [www.OHCHR.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12120&LangID=e](http://www.OHCHR.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12120&LangID=e).

<sup>15</sup> A/HRC/19/59/Add.5.



**rights-based policy coherence in the global partnership for development, which requires complete mainstreaming of all human rights, including the right to development, into the work of the United Nations system.**

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