

Introduction

This publication marks a major milestone along the path towards achieving what the States Members of the United Nations committed themselves to in the United Nations Millennium Declaration: making the right to development a reality for all. The right to development celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2011, marking a quarter century since the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986. The 33 chapters in this book attempt to put flesh on the bones of the Declaration by comprehensively examining the multiple dimensions of the right to development. The contributions to this volume not only clarify the meaning and status of this right but also survey the most salient challenges—based on actual development practice—to its transformative potential, including as a political project building on commitments that have been central to the United Nations since the 1940s; as a normative statement of people-centred development policy; as a framework reaffirming the indivisibility of all human rights; and as a clarification of the social justice outcomes expected from international cooperation and national policy. Policy commitment and coherence, process guidance, action strategies and measurable outcomes: together these concepts address the extraordinary breadth of the right to development.

According to its critics, who find the concept unhelpful to human rights or development, the concepts are too broad. For its most ardent proponents, these concepts define the pre-eminent human right, so valuable it should become a binding norm. Too nebulous, or essential? The debate is far from over.

The reader is invited to decide where on this spectrum the right to development lies, not on the basis of an abstract statement but after considering the in-depth analysis and reflections presented here.

They begin, in the four chapters of Part I, with the historical context and normative content of the right to development, reflecting a visionary policy, grounded in international law and relations and responsive to the challenges of late twentieth and early twenty-first century political economy and beyond.

The ten chapters in Part II clarify the process of the right, exploring the richness of the underlying principles and the compelling ethics of the right to development.

The nine chapters in Part III assess some specific settings in which the policies and principles in question could alter development practice and outcomes. Indeed, one of the painful lessons of the last 25 years and more has been the lack of traceable impact of the Declaration on development practice, and this part seeks to provide an evidence-based explanation of some major areas of relevant and potential international cooperation.

Nevertheless, there has been some progress, on which States, peoples' movements and other stakeholders can build, hopefully drawing on the tools and insights of the 10 chapters in Part IV, which seek to provide a road map for action and measuring outcomes, as well as concluding chapters that envisage the way forward.

Each of the parts opens with an introduction that sets out the context and explains the significance of each chapter, describing the relationship between them.

The book's overall purpose is to draw on over three decades of experience with the right to development, going beyond political posturing and analysing its constituent principles and actual applications in development practice and potential applications in

the years to come. Taken together, the contributions to this publication illustrate the far-reaching potential of the right to development and its relevance more than 25 years after the adoption of the Declaration. They make the case for reinvigorating this right in order to realize its added value to advancing human rights, development, and peace and security in an increasingly interdependent, fragile and changing world, including in the post-2015 agenda for sustainable development.