

# Realizing the right to development and a new development agenda

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This book annotates, elucidates and celebrates the right to development, its evolution, multiple dimensions and usefulness as a development paradigm for our globalized future. It provides the reader with a wealth of resources, including for the actual application of this right in development practice and for monitoring, action and progress.

The alternative vision for development policy and global partnership that was enshrined in the Declaration on the Right to Development, in 1986, an era of decolonization, carried the potential to bring about a paradigm shift that promised to advance human rights, development, and peace and security. Unfortunately, the years that followed saw the continuation of the predominant model of economic development, which despite leading to considerable progress, neglected social concerns, including human rights. Globalization, fostered and facilitated by advances in information, communications and technology, provided the context and overarching philosophy of development and brought many benefits. However, those benefits were, and continue to be, overwhelmingly concentrated among the already privileged: nations and populations alike. The interdependence and interconnectedness that globalization reinforced also meant that the negative impacts of such development crossed national boundaries with increased speed and ease, resulting in global economic, financial, food, energy, climate and other challenges. These, exacerbated by a lack or poor implementation of regulations, culminated in multiple crises.

It is now widely recognized that reliance on market forces as the sole engine and framework for development has failed. In the wake of these failures, it is

time to end the political polarization that has stifled the right to development. Instead we must reinvigorate it if we are to surmount the challenges to our common future, including poverty, inequality, hunger, unemployment, lack of access to clean water and sanitation, and limited sources of energy and natural resources. Doing so is a human rights imperative of the first order.

The normative content of the right to development reflects principles that should guide and shape policies and practices in a new development agenda for the future. All the present crises, most notably the climate crisis, have demonstrated that development itself has limits. We must rethink how we can achieve a kind of development that is not aimed exclusively at creating and distributing material wealth, with its pressures on the environmental resources of our shared planet, but takes into account human rights and respect for the individual and for peoples in all countries.

The international community has agreed on the need for sustainable, inclusive and equitable development. This must take place against the backdrop of the changing contours of geopolitical and socio-economic realities in an increasingly multipolar world. The fundamental changes taking place around us, including the resounding worldwide calls for democracy, human rights and responsible governance and institutions, will in all likelihood continue to shift the ground beneath our feet. Whereas laws and policies concerning development issues and those relating to human rights and the environment have been evolving in their separate compartments, the multidimensional right to development can promote coherence in the

policies emerging from the new ways of thinking that this paradigm demands.

The concept of an enabling environment for development which supports the enjoyment of all human rights by all lies at the heart of the Declaration. The right to development offers a framework in which to address gaps and failures in responsibility, accountability and regulation in both national and global governance. This right is strong in its emphasis on duties, especially the duty of the international community to cooperate, which is particularly consonant with multi-stakeholder involvement in contemporary governance at all levels, and the emergence of a multiplicity of actors and forms of global partnership. The multiple crises of recent years further affirm the call of the Declaration on the Right to Development for meaningful reform in global governance most notably in the economic arena, to ensure equality, democracy and accountability in line with human rights standards.

Making the right to development a living reality for all people everywhere calls for coherent policy, convergent practice and collective action supportive of all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, development and peace both within and between countries. Realizing the right to development will serve to renew, strengthen and revitalize the global partnership for development, bringing to it a focus on human dignity and the human rights-based approach to development, and a vibrant sense of community and humanity, participation and mutual understanding, solidarity and shared responsibilities. Real development far surpasses economic growth, and is premised on the values of human well-being and dignity as envisioned in the Declaration on the Right to Development. This can therefore inform our search for responses to the multiple crises, for sustainable development and for a transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda.