

**Statement by Mr. SAAD ALFARARGI,**

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*Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates, representatives of the United Nations, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am honoured to be with you today in my capacity as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to development to present my thematic report to the 74rd session of the General Assembly.

The activities of my mandate are outlined in my latest report to the 42nd session to the Human Rights Council. I will only mention here the activities related to the implementation of Resolution 36/9, which requested me to hold regional consultations on the implementation of the right to development. In accordance with that mandate, I have invited all States to participate in the consultations, according to their United Nations regional group. The consultations brought together representatives of Member States from each region, as well as representatives of United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, academia, civil society and the private sector. In April 2019, I convened a final expert meeting in Dakar at which participants sought to reflect on all the contributions made during the prior consultations and to identify universal recommendations. The outcome of the consultations is a **set of practical guidelines and recommendations** that can serve as a tool in designing, monitoring and assessing the structures, processes and outcomes of human rights-motivated development policies. I presented these guidelines to the Human Rights Council and I am looking forward to further discussing the outcomes of the consultations with all concerned stakeholders.

*Mr. Chairperson,*

Let me now turn to the presentation of my thematic report, which explores the explicit link between the right to development and disaster risk reduction and its practical implications.

A natural or human-made disaster can undo years of development progress in a matter of hours and can stall future development for the next generation. The number of disaster events per year has been increasing since the 1980s and is likely to continue to do so as a result of climate change, population growth, urbanization, an increase in the number of people living in coastal areas and floodplains and the degradation or loss of natural ecosystems.

DRR is an integral part of social and economic development and is essential if development is to be sustainable for the future. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the urgent need to reduce the risk of disasters is recognized and reaffirmed. At the same time, disasters and extreme weather events directly and indirectly affect the enjoyment of a range of human rights, including the right to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination and culture, as well as the right to development. The right to development is explicitly referred to in paragraph 19 (c) of the guiding principles of the Sendai Framework. Disaster risk reduction is therefore closely interlinked with the implementation of the right to development.

In an effort to assess the extent to which populations throughout the world have enjoyed the right to participate in planning and decision-making with regard to disaster risk reduction measures and policies, I issued a call for input, asking Member States and other stakeholders to provide information on measures taken or policies introduced since 2015 aimed at: identifying the populations most at risk for disasters, including those driven by, among other factors, conflict, climate change, population growth and governance and including such populations in planning of disaster risk reduction measures. I wish to thank the countries that provided practical examples of the ways that their Governments work to integrate the right to development into the national systems for disaster risk management.

By reviewing the existing measures, I came to the following conclusions:

- In order to integrate the right to development into disaster risk reduction efforts, Governments should promote channels of participation at all stages of the planning, implementation and monitoring of the related policies and programmes on a continuous basis for all relevant stakeholders. Under the Sendai Framework, while disaster risk reduction remains a responsibility of the national government, it also requires the active participation, support and contribution of all relevant stakeholders, such as the government, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, the private sector and the media. There should be opportunities for the equal participation in all relevant planning and decision-making processes of those who are most disadvantaged, including persons with disabilities, women, children and young people, minorities, indigenous peoples, persons of African descent and members of other disempowered and marginalized groups.

- National platforms for disaster risk reduction are nationally owned and led multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms. In my view, national platforms are instrumental in ensuring the integration of the right to development in disaster risk reduction efforts by providing the space for the participation of all relevant parts of society in the planning, evaluation, monitoring and implementation of disaster risk reduction plans and programmes at the State level. I am concerned that, to date, only 65 countries have established national platforms and I recommend that States endeavour to create favourable conditions for gender-balanced participation in such platforms and for the inclusion of representatives of marginalized groups. I also recommend that, depending on the types of disasters affecting particular countries and their geopolitical structure, similar platforms could be created at the regional and/or community levels.

- Further, under the Sendai Framework, States are required at a minimum to collect data disaggregated by sex, age and disability. Data collected in the context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda targets may and should also be used for the needs of disaster risk reduction planning and policymaking, and such data need to be supplemented in accordance with the specific needs of the topic. Data disaggregation efforts need to draw on a human rights-based approach to data. States should enhance the international cooperation provided for capacity-building activities aimed at improving data collection in developed and developing countries. Civil society’s capacity to gather disaggregated data should be enhanced, and innovative approaches should be developed to bridge gaps in data collection.

- If policies, plans and programmes related to DRR are to be effective, it is of crucial importance that the individuals and communities concerned be well informed of the processes for their creation and their outcomes. States should establish mechanisms that provide easy access to information related to disaster risk reduction development policies and processes and enact legislation guaranteeing the right to obtain access to information, including information about financing. Legal remedies should be provided to ensure that access to information is not denied. States should provide information in public spaces in relevant languages and accessible formats, such as images and posters, using larger fonts and audio transmission. The gender and diversity dimensions of how and where such information is displayed should be considered. Warning communication technology should be equally accessible to persons of all ages, disabilities and backgrounds. Information on hazards, vulnerabilities and risks and on ways of reducing the impacts thereof should be disseminated to everyone and in formats that are accessible to persons who are deaf or blind or who have a learning disability. States should enhance international cooperation provided for the dissemination of information.

In the report I also make a number of recommendations aiming to ensure the genuine and informed participation of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction efforts and measures to ensure the order to ensure gender-equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches to disaster risk governance.

I am looking forward to your reactions and input and to continuing the dialogue on the existing challenges.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

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