



The Second Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

Wednesday, 11 November 2020, 10:00 CET

Virtual meeting

Statement by

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Chair of the EMRTD

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the second session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development.

The Expert Mechanism was created by the Human Rights Council in 2019. Its five members were appointed early 2020 and the Mechanism became operational on 1st of May 2020. Due to the measures in place because of the COVID 19 pandemic, our first session was held virtually and in private. I am honoured that my fellow members elected me to chair this body as its first Chair. We report annually to the Human Rights Council and we submitted our first report to the September session of the Council this year. It gave us great satisfaction that the Council has requested us to implement our recommendations. This will allow us to move ahead with our planned activities.

The persistent situation related to the COVID 19 pandemic does not allow us to organize our second session in person. We are therefore constraint to hold this session virtually. It is not possible to ensure interpretation at this session. It is our hope that future sessions can be held with full interpretation and in person to ensure full and meaningful participation in our work.

We hope to engage with all Member States and other stakeholders in a productive dialogue during this and future sessions, as well as inter-sessionally.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In our first session, we agreed that our work would be guided by two overarching objectives: to mainstream, reinvigorate and operationalize the right to development; and to enhance the ability of grass-roots organizations to use the right to development.

We also agreed that it was important to go beyond rhetoric, to identify obstacles to the realization of the right to development and to make concrete policy recommendations on how to overcome them.

Moreover, we agreed to address in our work the three levels of responsibility regarding the right to development, as identified by the former high-level task force on the implementation of the

right to development, namely: (a) States acting collectively in global and regional partnerships; (b) States acting individually as they adopted and implemented policies that affected persons not strictly within their jurisdiction; and (c) States acting individually as they formulated national development policies and programmes affecting persons within their jurisdiction.

Finally, we agreed that our work should not be limited to desk research, but involve engagement at country level and meetings with relevant international and regional organizations, as well as other stakeholders, such as during the annual sessions or through questionnaires and online consultations.

We identified five themes on which we intend to submit studies to the Council during our first term.

The first thematic study would be on operationalizing the right to development in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on the targets incorporated as means of implementation.

The second thematic study would be on racism, racial discrimination and the right to development.

The third thematic study would be on inequalities and the right to development.

The fourth thematic study would be on the right to development in international investment law.

The final thematic study to be undertaken during the current three-year term of the Expert Mechanism would be a field study on non-State actors and the duty to cooperate.

We will have ample time to discuss these studies in more detail during this session and your input will be appreciated.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have started our mandate in challenging times. The COVID-19 pandemic reverses our progress made in combating poverty. It is not only a health crisis, but also a human crisis. Rising poverty and inequality was already a global challenge, but COVID-19 has deepened these existing inequalities. The social and economic disruptions of COVID-19 have highlighted the persistence of deep inequalities within and between nations. The pandemic increases inequality and discrimination, and ever more people are left behind.

As High Commissioner Bachelet said during the first biennial panel on the right to development: “Recovering from COVID-19 is a chance to reverse longstanding cycles of poverty and inequality.” “Everyone must benefit from response and recovery efforts, including scientific and technological progress.” The right to development is fundamental in this regard. It calls for the active, free and meaningful participation of all in development and the equitable and fair enjoyment of the benefits of development. International cooperation, solidarity and

multilateralism are key to achieving a rights-based recovery, in which all human beings can benefit from the COVID-19 vaccine.

I once again welcome all to our second session.

Thank you.