

**The 6th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development
Item 5 (d) of the Provisional Agenda**

Implementation of the mandate and programme of work
Wednesday 2 November 2022, 11h – 13h Central European Time

**Discussion on least developed countries and the right to development
Concept Note**

Introduction:

The realization of the right to development is important today for both developing and developed nations, but it is evident that for the least developed nations, this realization is of a paramount importance. For millions of, women, men and children living in [least developed countries](#) (LDCs), landlocked developed countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), development is one of the most urgent of human rights imperatives, where international cooperation for development is becoming more relevant to the discussion and debate.

Least developed countries (LDCs) already face [challenges](#) due to multiple limiting international and national conditions, related but not limited to lack of good governance, lack of rule of law, corruption, lack of technology, infrastructure and capacities to guarantee their development objectives.

The right to development framework provides elements to help address these challenges. On the one hand, the right to development (RTD) entitles all individuals and peoples to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development; to define their own development through free, active and meaningful participation in its process, and fair distribution of its benefits. On the other hand, the Declaration on the Right to Development places on States a duty to cooperate to realize development and eliminate obstacles to development.

The duty to cooperate becomes more relevant in the face of the second part of the Fifth United Nations Conference for Least Developed Countries ([UN LDC 5](#)) that will meet in Doha from 5 to 9 March 2023 to tackle the unprecedented influence of the COVID-19, climate, and economic crises as well as research-based, innovative thinking and new solutions for challenges faced by LDCs. The first part of the Conference had met in New York in March this year and had adopted the [Doha Programme of Action](#) (DPoA) for Least Developed Countries. The UN LDC5 is one of the biggest gatherings of world leaders and is expected to set an ambitious development agenda for these countries and leave no one behind. It is also expected to make the international community mobilize international assistance measures and actions to LDCs and confirm the renewal of the partnership between LDCs and their development partners to combat various challenges, eradicate poverty and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals to facilitate the graduation of LDCs.

In this sense, the DPoA falls in line with the obligation of States under the [1986 Declaration on the Right to Development](#) to act collectively to adopt international policies for realizing the right to development. This is only one of many synergies that can be drawn between the RTD and LDCs graduation criteria and ways in which the Declaration's normative principles can be mainstreamed into the DPoA.

Purpose

1. Engage with the LDCs, understand their needs and the right to development elements that can help fulfil these needs.
2. Exchange concerns and obstacles of LDCs in realising the right to development and ways to operationalise this right.
3. Identify the importance of mainstreaming the right to development in the implementation of the DPoA for LDCs to facilitate their graduation criteria

Guiding questions

1. What are the pre-existing and new challenges that LDCs face in the pursuit of development and how can the RTD help overcome them?
2. How can the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development engage with LDCs to better promote and protect the right to development and promote the DPoA?
3. How can the RTD be mainstreamed in the DPoA with essential normative principles and implementation targets? What are the synergies between the RTD and LDCs graduation criteria?

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