

*Check against delivery*



**The contribution of development  
to the enjoyment of all Human Rights**

(Human Rights Council resolution 47/11)

**Statement by Nada Al- Nashif  
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1 September 2022

Geneva, Palais des Nation, Room XXV

Distinguished President,

Deputy Executive Secretary,

Distinguished Panelists,

Excellencies,

Colleagues and Friends,

It is an honour to open this event, the first in the series of five seminars on the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights.

In mandating this seminar series, the Human Rights Council recognized that sustainable development and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. These seminars aim to deepen this understanding: What type of development contributes to the genuine protection of human rights? Is it unrestrained market-dominated development that results in growing inequalities, populist politics and the depletion of natural resources and biodiversity to the detriment of people and planet? Certainly not that kind.

The comprehensive definition of development in the preamble of the 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development is a useful starting point. It defines development as an economic process, but also a social, cultural and political process. It requires an inclusive approach, based on participation by all, and on the distribution of benefits from development that

contribute to ending poverty and reducing inequalities. It considers the needs of both present and future generations.

The primary locus for development, just like for the protection of human rights, is at the national and local levels. We have, through these seminars, the opportunity to discuss common local challenges, while also recognising regional differences. A representative of the Guinea Bissau's Rural Women's Organization illustrated these by saying: "If there is no electricity, no power, our children cannot study. If they cannot study what will become of their future?"<sup>1</sup> Children everywhere need to study but what they require to be able to study is not the same everywhere. In some regions the main challenge for children to access school can be lack of access to transport or food, or discrimination based on their migration status or environmental disasters.<sup>2</sup> Human rights are universal and development is localised.

The seminars will also allow us to discuss daunting global challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic brought sustainable development to a standstill in many countries and set it back by several years in others. According to the World Bank, between 75 and 95 million additional people could be living in extreme poverty in 2022 compared to pre-COVID-19 projections.<sup>3</sup> Global challenges such as the climate emergency, the fuel and food crises, armed conflicts,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/07/people-share-priorities-first-ever-review-guinea-bissaus-sustainable-development>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/01/young-activist-sets-bank-tackle-poverty-and-environmental-damage>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>

growing inequality, including gender inequality, forced displacement and unsustainable sovereign debt, and a shrinking civic space in many parts of the world require our collective commitment, political will and concerted action.

We need new avenues for development, shaped and enhanced by human rights. This includes the need for a human rights enhancing economy. One that bring together economics, development and human rights. One that upholds the dignity and rights of all and promotes sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

We must double down without delay and return to the determined pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, which are underpinned by economic, civil, cultural, political and social rights, as well as the human right to development. In his *Call to Action for Human Rights*, the United Nations Secretary-General identified human rights and sustainable development as priority domains, making the argument that a human rights-based approach to development results in more sustainable, powerful and effective outcomes.

In response to these challenges, our Office has stepped up its engagement at the country level on economic, social and cultural rights, the SDGs and prevention in an effort to strengthen the link between human rights and development. Through the Surge Initiative, we brought together human rights experts and macroeconomists who, for instance, provided analysis of

provisions in national and municipal budgets for social protection looking at how to improve participation of communities, particularly the most marginalised, in budgetary processes.

In his report on *Our Common Agenda*, the Secretary-General has called for a renewed social contract, adapted to the challenges of this century, based on equal rights and opportunities for all. Establishing new social contracts anchored in human rights will help rebuild trust between people and their governments, give priority to combating inequalities and creating an enabling environment for realizing all human rights. And we see striking examples of people and governments working together including in the Europe region: In the small city of Grigny, in the suburbs of Paris, the award winning administration tackled poverty and inequality through measures that included providing free menstrual protection for women and ultrasound machine for gynecological follow up.<sup>4</sup> It is this solidarity, at the community level, as well as among peoples and nations, that must underpin a new global deal.

I am confident these seminars will be an opportunity for us to collectively address some critical questions- how to strengthen the global commitment to international cooperation for development that maximizes the enjoyment of rights and leaves no one behind; how to tailor regional development strategies that are fit to the diverse human rights challenges of each part of our world.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2021/11/worlds-best-mayor-poverty-makes-realization-human-rights-impossible>

Over the next two days your discussions, focused on the Europe and Central Asia region, will also provide insights into the importance of Developed Countries commitments in increasing finance for development anchored in human rights. We will learn from the experience of some of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members that have reached or exceeded the long established target of 0.7 of their gross national income to Official Development Assistance and how that is making a difference in the enjoyment of human rights for people in poorer countries. Finally, we will hear about broadening opportunities for migrants and host communities to have their rights protected, in the context of this particular region.

Finally, we must remind ourselves that development and human rights communities share the same goals – to end discrimination and deprivation, advance human dignity and equality, and realize the well-being and rights of everyone, everywhere.

I wish you fruitful discussions and look forward to your conclusions and recommendations.

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