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**Statement by Mr Surya Deva  
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Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to present to the Human Rights Council my vision report as the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development. I will also be reporting on a country visit to Albania conducted by my predecessor, Mr Saad Alfarargi.

Mr President

Let me begin with two observations. First, the right to development is a human right relevant for everyone, everywhere. It is a route to realize all other human rights and fundamental freedoms and preserve intergenerational equity. The right to development is also central to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement.

Second, the right remains unrealised for millions of people in all world regions due to multiple challenges. In my report, I have identified six challenges that are undermining the ability of States and other actors to fully realize the right to development. These challenges are: conceptual confusion, limited capacities, polarization, lack of participation, inequalities, and the neocolonial and neoliberal order.

The report outlined targeted strategies to overcome these challenges. For example, the conceptual confusion could be overcome by mainstreaming a holistic understanding of the right to development encompassing the four *facets* of development: economic, social, cultural and political. Equally important are the three *elements* of the right to development, that is, the ability of human beings to participate in, contribute to and enjoy the right to development. Then there are four overarching *principles* of the right to development that can be derived from the Declaration on the Right to Development and other relevant instruments: self-determination, intersectionality, intergenerational equity and fair distribution.

My vision report also highlighted several specific ways in which the right to development adds a unique value to international human rights law. For instance, the right to development reflects the collective dimension of human rights and embodies the practical application of the principle that human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

States, UN agencies, international financial institutions, public development banks, businesses and civil society organizations should integrate such a holistic understanding of the right to development in their policies, programmes and projects.

#### Distinguished delegates

There is overwhelming evidence that the current model of development is neither inclusive nor sustainable: it is focused on cumulative economic development, does not ensure the participation of people and ignores the planetary boundaries. The world therefore needs a new model of “planet-centred participatory development”.

The right to development goes hand in hand with the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The goal of leaving no one behind should include not merely people but also plants and animals because, without these organisms, people cannot survive. States and all other actors should therefore pursue a holistic understanding of the right to development because this right is not a licence to destroy the planet or undermine the ability of future generations to realize their legitimate development aspirations.

Moreover, all development policies, programmes and projects should be developed through the active, free and meaningful participation of people in an inclusive manner. All decision makers should adopt a bottom-up approach to participation and recognise the agency of all individuals, peoples and communities to determine their development aspirations and priorities. Participation should take place at early stages of decision-making and affirmative measures should be taken to overcome financial or linguistic barriers to meaningful participation. Moreover, civic space should be preserved to enable participation.

#### Mr President

I have set out three primary goals for my mandate: (i) promote a holistic understanding of the right to development; (ii) mainstream the right to development into governance mechanisms at all levels; and (iii) bridge the political divide between the Global North and the Global South regarding the right to development. In fulfilling these goals, I will be adopting a consultative and evidence-based approach to engage all stakeholders in an inclusive and transparent manner. I will also be integrating an intersectional perspective in discharging my mandate.

To mainstream the right to development, I have started engaging with various UN agencies, Governments, national human rights institutions, businesses, civil society organisations and academia. In the near future, I will be developing policy briefs providing practical guidance to States on implementing the right to development at the national level. I will also establish an academic circle on the right to development and constitute a global advisory body comprising children and youth.

During my mandate, I intend to focus on four sets of thematic issues concerning *actors*, *beneficiaries*, *causes* and *disrupters*. Particular attention will be devoted to the role of States, international financial institutions, public development banks and businesses. Although all human beings and peoples are the beneficiaries of the right to development, I will especially focus on the development aspirations and needs of certain vulnerable or marginalized groups such as children, youth, women, migrants, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and future generations. Among the many root causes of the non-realization of the right to development, the focus will be on lack of participation, capacity deficits, conflicts, inequalities, economic order and business models. Finally, three potential disrupters to realizing the right to development will be explored: conflicts, climate change and new technologies.

I believe that the time has come for the world community to give the right to development its legitimate space in the universe of human rights. In this context, it will be critical to adopt the draft Covenant on the Right to Development as soon as possible and take proactive measures to implement the right at the national level. As we mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, I call on all States and other actors to work together to ensure that the right to development remains central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a human rights economy, the Summit of the Future and the calls to address structural issues in the current economic order.

Distinguished delegates

I also have the pleasure to present the report of my predecessor, Mr Alfarargi, regarding the country visit that he conducted to Albania in November 2022. Mr Alfarargi visited the capital Tirana and the municipalities of Elbasan and Kamëz and met with representatives of the

Government, civil society organizations and United Nations agencies. Mr Alfarargi expressed his gratitude to the Government for its excellent cooperation and to the representatives of civil society organizations, academics and other stakeholders for their valuable input.

Mr Alfarargi was especially interested in learning more about the ways in which the national and local governments promote and guarantee effective public participation in development policies and programmes; the key challenges that the country faces in the implementation of the right to development; and the policies and measures that are in place to address inequalities, including those based on gender, disability and social or other status. He focused on inequalities, since he considered these as a major obstacle to the realization of the right to development.

In his recommendations, Mr Alfarargi encouraged all levels of government to involve, at an early stage, civil society and other stakeholders in discussions relating to development plans and policies and to allow adequate time for consideration of their input. He provided a series of recommendations on amending different laws and by-laws to improve the participation of person with disabilities, women, minorities and other vulnerable segments of the society in political, social, cultural and economic development.

Thank you very much for your kind attention and I look forward to the interactive dialogue.