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United Nations Human Rights Council

**THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL
WORKING GROUP ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

OPENING STATEMENT

BY

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on the Right to Development**

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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

I am deeply honoured to be re-elected as Chair of this Working Group and want to thank all delegations for the confidence reposed in me.

As we convene this 25th session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development today, I want to begin by extending my appreciation to High Commissioner Volker Türk for his opening remarks and for his consistent support to this Group.

It is worth recalling that this Working Group was established in 1998, as a follow-up mechanism to the Declaration on the Right to Development with the overall mandate to monitor and review progress made in the promotion and implementation of the right to development.

Since 1998, the Working Group has implemented several processes, in distinct yet partially overlapping time periods, and focused on various aspects of its mandate.

From 2000 to 2004, the Working Group's efforts were largely determined by its interaction with the then independent expert on the right to development and the thematic studies he produced.

From 2005 to 2010, a similar interaction with the high-level task force on the right to development determined its work.

From 2011 to 2018, the Working Group considered the draft criteria and operational sub-criteria for the realization of the right to development.

In 2016, the Working Group also had before it a set of standards for the implementation of the right to development which were prepared by me.

Unfortunately, however, the Group was unable to make substantive progress towards implementation of its mandate.

It was largely due to this stalemate that the Human Rights Council mandated me as the Chair to prepare a draft legally binding instrument on the right to development in 2018. Assisted by a team of highly capable legal experts, I presented a draft text of a legally binding instrument to the working group in 2019 which was negotiated among member states in subsequent sessions of the group.

In September 2023, as requested by the Human Rights Council, I submitted the draft final text, designated as a covenant on the right to development, to the Council. Thereafter, the Council transmitted the text to the General Assembly for further consideration, negotiation and adoption as early as possible.

Moving forward, at this session, the Working Group will consider the interrelationship between the right to development and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the contribution of the right to development towards combating discrimination including racial discrimination.

In the broader context of our discussions, it is important to reflect on the overarching theme of development. Development is not merely about economic growth or material prosperity; it is about enhancing the well-being and dignity of all individuals and communities not only in the Global South

but also in the Global North. It encompasses the pursuit of social justice, the protection of human rights, and the promotion of sustainable practices that ensure a prosperous planet for future generations. As we navigate through the complexities of our agenda, let us remain guided by the principles of inclusivity, equity, and solidarity.

Reflecting on the past years, it is evident that, despite the lack of substantive progress, our collective efforts have succeeded in promoting awareness and understanding of the right to development. From fostering dialogue and cooperation to advocating for policy reforms and initiatives, the Working Group has remained at the forefront of shaping the international discourse on development within the broader human rights framework, which we recognise as being inter-related and inter-dependent.

Looking ahead to the agenda before us, we are presented with a unique opportunity to build upon the foundations laid in previous years and chart a course for future action. Our discussions will undoubtedly be enriched by the invaluable insights and experiences shared by our esteemed colleagues as well as experts in the field of development that are gathered here today.

As we embark on this deliberative process, I encourage each member of the Working Group to constructively contribute their insights, expertise, and perspectives, with a view to identifying practical solutions and recommendations that can contribute to the advancement of the right to development. Together, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to leaving no one behind and ensuring that the benefits of development are equitably enjoyed by all.

Thank you.