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**Video Message to High-level meeting commemorating
the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the
Right to Development**

Tuesday, 28 February 2023, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Mr. President, High Commissioner Türk, Distinguished Guests,
I am honoured to address this important gathering and wish to
thank President Bálek for the invitation.

More than 35 years ago, the General Assembly adopted the
landmark Declaration on the Right to Development.

It was a ground-breaking achievement in the struggle for
human dignity, freedom, equality and justice for its bold appeal
for every member of society to participate in shaping key
decisions.

Today, the right to development remains a bold and visionary
intention, yet to be realized by billions of people is still pending
formal recognition.

The time has come to make it a reality.

Excellencies,

The right to development took us beyond a narrow perspective
of economic growth, the Declaration recognized development
as a human right, entailing comprehensive social, cultural and
political processes.

This perspective informed the broad consensus reached on the
2015 agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals –
underpinned by the notion of progressive and indivisible rights.

The importance of a comprehensive understanding of
development became even more clear with COVID-19.

The pandemic was a clear demonstration that failure to deliver on one dimension has cascading effects over other aspects of people's wellbeing.

The Declaration also underscored the centrality of people as agents and ultimate beneficiaries of development.

Sustainable development can only be achieved with the active, free and meaningful participation of women and men, of young and older persons.

It demands a fair distribution of benefits, between people and nations.

The time has come to address these inequalities and recognize the right to development as a human right – on a par with other human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We need a radical shift to make our aspirations for a more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable future a reality.

The Secretary-General and I encourage all Member States to actively engage in this important process, as we embark on a stocktake of the 2030 agenda in September to keep the promise of the SDGs alive

People are hurting, the planet is burning. The world cannot wait.

I wish you a successful meeting.