

Check against delivery

**“The Right to Development at 25:
Policy Coherence in the Global Partnership for
Development”**



UN General Assembly event
to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of
the United Nations Declaration on the Right to
Development

**Closing Statement by
Ms. Navi Pillay,
High Commissioner for Human Rights**

10 a.m. -12 noon,
Tuesday, 8 November 2011
Conference Room 4, NLB, UN Headquarters, NY

Mr Secretary General,
Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Distinguished delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Secretary-General in his opening statement made a call for a change of mindset and a shift in paradigm to realize the noble ideals of the right to development in the interest of our common humanity. In supporting this call, I would like to remind you that a true transformation demands that we see the world first and foremost through the lens of human dignity. Today's worldwide upheavals calling for change provide ample testimony that the pursuit of progress without regard to human rights premised on human dignity cannot be sustained. Human rights enshrine the intrinsic worth of all human beings, born free and equal in dignity and rights. I believe that our discussions here today can signal the dawn of a new era when we think, speak and act in one voice both within and beyond the United Nations, for the greater wellbeing of all. The many milestones of multilateralism recalled by the Secretary-General represent the promises we have made over the years. The fact that almost three billion people live in poverty and that 20% of the world's people hold 70% of its total income means that we have not kept our promises. It is time to make the right to development a reality for all.

Towards this aim, the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly called on my Office to launch a programme of commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development. We have responded to this call by embarking on a far-reaching programme, which has led to a series of landmark developments: in response to my call for global commemoration of the anniversary, joint statements were issued by nine Human Rights Treaty Bodies on the importance of the right to development to their work, and by seventeen UN system agencies and other international organizations on the need for policy coherence for its implementation. For the first time, ECOSOC devoted a coordination segment of its substantive session to consider the right to development in relation to the global partnership for development; and the General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union set aside a day to consider the role of Parliament in realizing the right to development. My Office also organized the Human Rights Council thematic panel, supported the joint anniversary event of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation in Geneva and the international conference organized by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Berlin. We have relentlessly supported all these activities, and our efforts have been acknowledged by Member States and many other stakeholders.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me recall my key messages throughout this anniversary year.

First and foremost, development is a human right. The Declaration on the Right to Development puts people and their rights at the centre of public policy. Development must aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and provide for a fair distribution of benefits, without discrimination.

Secondly, the right to development belongs to all. The anniversary stands in the uneasy light of the fact that for millions, development remains in the realm of rhetoric. We must respond to the aspirations of those who live at the margins, both locally and globally. Vulnerabilities of persons living in developing countries, the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States, in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, and in fragile States justify particular action. Poverty can breed conflict, and too many are locked in cycles of meaningless violence, too many lives are being lost, far too much money is spent on military might, and far too little on fulfilling human rights: The internationally agreed development

goals are in fact being shot down in a world where global military expenditure has doubled since the adoption of the MDGs in 2000 reaching a record high of over 1.5 trillion dollars.

Thirdly, the right to development responds to contemporary challenges. The gradual transition to a single global economy calls us all to our common humanity and our common but differentiated responsibilities. Reform for more democratic, inclusive and participatory global economic governance will promote an enabling environment for development. And the right to development can support the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals.

Finally, we must act together. Our common heritage of a complex web of interconnected challenges, calls for human solidarity and renewed partnerships. We must foster policy coherence and systemic integration of human rights, including the right to development, across sectors, across institutions and across layers of governance. Human aspirations for well-being can be realized only when there is a strong accountability framework.

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are coming to the end of the anniversary year. Many of the discussions so far have echoed the key messages that I mentioned above. They call for resolute transition from theory to action. They have also highlighted the many stubborn challenges in the meaningful realization of the right to development:

Firstly, the politicization, polarization and impasse in the intergovernmental debate on the right to development must end. It is imperative to create an enabling international environment, greater political consensus and more political will.

Secondly, we must work to enlarge the organized constituency in support of the right to development. NGOs and civil society at large are the engine of human rights. We must hear them, include them, and support them in their work.

Thirdly, the General Assembly resolution which established the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights explicitly includes the mandate to promote and protect the realization of the right to development and to enhance support from relevant bodies of the UN system for this purpose. However this right is not expressly embedded in the mandates and programmes of these

bodies, underscoring the seminal importance of policy coherence in the global partnership for development. This requires full mainstreaming of all human rights including the right to development in the work of the UN system, most importantly in the upcoming Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, in the post-2015 development agenda and in addressing globalization.

All these realities are interconnected. Human rights, development, and peace and security meet in the UN Charter as well as in the Declaration on the Right to Development. The right to development places human rights at the heart of the development process, and mandates the strengthening of peace, security and disarmament for development, and the use of freed-up resources from disarmament towards its cause. This implies that the agendas of the three Committees also meet in the right to development. I therefore sincerely thank the Chair of the Third Committee - H. E. Mr. Haniff Hussein - for supporting my initiative for this joint gathering.

I hope the Member States will continue this tradition of joint action between the Committees with the view to ensuring policy coherence in advancing the right to development and the global partnership for development. Over the years we have built up a

substantial body of materials and experience on the policy and practice of the right to development, which we are ready to make available to inform your work.

The Declaration on the Right to Development applies to everyone, irrespective of all personal distinctions, irrelevant to all geographical demarcations and indifferent to all economic classifications. The international community endorsed this right by consensus at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights.

Our ecosystem is a constant reminder of our interconnectedness, and the right to development can respond to the challenges of climate change, because its conception of development was never blinded in pure material growth, but rooted in the unfolding and blossoming of the human person in an environment which allows her to grow. As we look ahead to Rio+20 in 2012, we recall the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which said – “The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.” Rekindling the light of the right to development necessitates a shift of paradigm and a change of mind-set. Self-interest can hardly be disentangled from the interests of others - whether persons or nations - Today, there is hardly a North or South, East or West. There is only a community of nations and peoples.

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you all for the engaging and enlightening discussion we have had today. In closing, I wish to reiterate that this is only the beginning of our concerted efforts to make the right to development a reality for all. I look forward to our continued close collaboration towards policy coherence to strengthen the global partnership for development both in principle and in practice.

I especially thank the Secretary-General for being here with us today and for his inspiring statement. I thank the President of the General Assembly and count on your foresight and commitment in guiding the General Assembly towards collective action for peace and security, human rights and development.

I am encouraged by the commitment of the Chairpersons of the three Committees, and am confident that your collaboration today is a first step towards a new human rights-based global partnership for development in the years to come.

Finally, I thank all participants for your active participation.

The meeting is closed.

[GAVEL]

