

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General
12 July 2011

Original: English

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**Statement on the importance and relevance of the right to development, adopted on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development***

1. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development (the Declaration), adopted by the General Assembly on 4 December 1986,¹ will be celebrated in 2011. To mark this occasion, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (the Committee) wishes to emphasize the close relationship and the complementarity existing between the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (the Covenant) and the Declaration.

2. The Committee recalls that the Charter of the United Nations obliges States to take action, individually and jointly, for the promotion and respect of human rights and economic and social progress. Article 55 specifies that the promotion of full employment and development is integral to such efforts.² In 1948, the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its articles 22 to 27 proclaim various economic, social and cultural rights, in particular the rights to work; to social security; to an adequate standard of living, including the rights to food and to housing; to health; to education; and to enjoy and freely participate in cultural life. Subsequently, these rights were enshrined and elaborated in the Covenant of 1966. The substantive articles 1 to 15 of the Covenant inspired and shaped numerous fundamental elements of the right to development.

3. Notwithstanding this incorporation of fundamental components of the right to development in the Covenant, the implementation of the right to development faced many structural obstacles. Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that “everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized”. Responding primarily to the special needs and concerns of developing countries, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986 and expressed its concern at the serious obstacles to development, as well as to the complete fulfillment of human beings and of peoples, constituted, inter alia, by the denial of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and its consideration that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent. The Declaration emphasizes that in order to promote development, equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the

* Adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at its forty-sixth session.

¹ Resolution 41/128, annex.

² See also the preamble and Arts. 1 and 56 of the Charter.

implementation, promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and that, accordingly, the promotion of, respect for and enjoyment of certain human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot justify the denial of other human rights and fundamental freedoms.

4. The Declaration also highlights that development is a multifaceted and participatory process. Specifically, the Declaration recognizes that development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom. Furthermore, the Declaration proclaims that the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, through which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.

5. The complementarity between the rights contained in the Covenant and the right to development in the Declaration is manifest, inter alia, in the correspondence between articles 3 and 4 of the Declaration on the Right to Development relating to national and international responsibilities and article 2 of the Covenant on the obligations of States parties, including the duty to provide international assistance and cooperation; and in the provisions of article 8, paragraph 1, of the Declaration on the Right to Development and those of the Covenant relating to, for example, ensuring the empowerment and active participation of women, disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups; employment; basic resources and fair distribution of income; eradication of poverty; the provision of an adequate standard of living, including food and housing; health services; education; and enjoyment of culture.

6. The Committee, in accordance with its mandate,³ has adopted several general comments and statements that not only complement the substance of the right to development but also indicate the ways and means of implementing the fundamental elements of the right to development. These include general comment No. 3 (1990) on the nature of States parties' obligations and its statements on globalization (15 May 1998),⁴ poverty (4 May 2001),⁵ and the Millennium Development Goals (September 2010).⁶ Moreover, in its dialogue with States parties the Committee also consistently recalls the commitment of developed countries to provide at least 0.7 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance,⁷ and the duty incumbent on all States to cooperate in the promotion of development and respect for all human rights and

³ Economic and Social Council resolutions 1985/17 and 1987/5.

⁴ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 2* (E/1999/22-E/C.12/1998/26), chap. VI, sect. A, para. 515.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2002, *Supplement No. 2* (E/2002/22-E/C.12/2001/17), annex VII.

⁶ Joint statement of the Chairpersons of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, presented at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, New York, 20-22 September 2010, available from www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10329&LangID=E. See also the earlier joint statement by the Committee and the special rapporteurs on economic, social and cultural rights of the Commission on Human Rights, on the Millennium Development Goals and economic, social and cultural rights (29 November 2002), *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 2* (E/2003/22-E/C.12/2002/13), annex VII.

⁷ See the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development (*Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7)), para. 42; and the 2005 World Summit outcome document (General Assembly resolution 60/1), para. 23 (b).

fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Committee considers that the right to development, through the systematic application of the core principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability, at both the national and international levels, establishes a specific framework within which the duty to provide international cooperation and assistance has to be implemented.

7. The Committee, recognizing and reaffirming the linkage and the synergy between the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Declaration on the Right to Development, is resolved to continue monitoring the implementation of all the rights protected by the Covenant, contributing simultaneously to the full realization of the relevant elements of the right to development. In doing so, the Committee will, in its examination of the reports of States parties and in its dialogue with them, continue to address the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment and the creation of conditions for achieving economic and social progress and development for all, including for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups.
