Statement by Prof. Akmal Saidov
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At the 12th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

Panel Discussion: "The Impact of Trade Tariffs on the Realisation of the Right to Development"
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(7-minute speech)

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Distinguished Chair,
Honourable Members of the Expert Mechanism,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address this **12th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development**.

I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the United Nations and the Expert Mechanism for providing a platform for dialogue on the most pressing dimensions of the right to development from **trade** and **climate finance, to artificial intelligence, public participation**, and the **role of civil society.**

We gather here just after **United Nations Day on 24 October**, a reminder of the enduring principles of the UN Charter – **peace, cooperation, and human rights for all.** At a time when the world faces growing geopolitical, economic, and environmental challenges, the **right to development must remain the cornerstone of global solidarity and shared responsibility**.

For Uzbekistan, the **right to development is not a rhetorical aspiration it is a practical roadmap for transforming lives**. It means that every person must have the opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy the fruits of national and global progress.

Trade and human rights have an intertwined relationship, as human rights often influence the prevalence, scope, or availability of an international

trade agreement. Most of the world's economically dominant countries use human rights language in their trade agreements. Human rights have permeated so much into trade that over 75% of the world's governments now have trade agreements that include human rights provisions.

Trade, finance, and **technology** are not merely economic issues they are human rights issues, directly shaping people's opportunities and dignity.

Fair and **transparent trade systems**, **equitable tariff regimes**, and **inclusive economic partnerships** are vital for ensuring that globalization serves humanity, not inequality.

Uzbekistan's experience under the **European Union's GSP+ system** shows how fair tariff policies can support the right to development. Uzbekistan enjoys **reduced tariffs** on most export goods in exchange for its commitment to **27 core international conventions** on human rights, labour rights, environmental protection, and good governance.

Thanks to this arrangement, Uzbekistan's **exports to the European Union have grown fourfold**, helping to create new jobs, attract investment, and diversify our economy. This clearly demonstrates that **tariff reduction linked with human rights standards** can drive inclusive and sustainable development.

24 October 2025, in **Brussels**, a historic **Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement** was signed between **Uzbekistan and the European Union** in the presence of the Presidents of Uzbekistan, the European Council and the European Commission.

This agreement establishes a comprehensive legal framework for deepening cooperation in trade, investment, sustainable development, science, education, and green technologies. It reaffirms our shared commitment to human rights, the rule of law and inclusive development.

In advancing the right to development globally, we offers and proposes the following:

First. We support the movement toward adoption of a **legally binding international instrument on the right to development**, thereby strengthening the global normative framework and ensuring accountability.

Second. Another way to mainstream human rights in trade rules would be to legally enshrine the primacy of human rights norms in an international treaty such as **the treaty on business and human rights** currently being negotiated.

Third. Improving knowledge is an important component of good governance. We propose that the **OHCHR, in cooperation with WTO, UNCTAD, and the UNDP**, develop an E-learning course and expert networks on "**Trade, Tariffs, and Human Rights**" for civil servants, judges, academia, and National Human Rights Institutions.

Fourth. It will be good to promote South–South and Triangular Cooperation for inclusive trade. We encourage the creation of a **Right to Development Partnership Platform** to share best practices, technologies, and fair-trade mechanisms among developing countries and regional organizations.

Let us remember, in the words of Kofi Annan, “We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.” **This trinity remains our compass today.**

Thank you for your attention.