Statement by Prof. Akmal Saidov
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At the 12th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development
Discussion: "How to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development: reflections and proposals"
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Distinguished Chair,
Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

It is a great honour to take part in this discussion dedicated to *"***How to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development."** This anniversary is a moment not only to look back, but to renew our shared commitment to ensuring that the right to development becomes a living reality for all people.

Adopted in 1986, the Declaration affirms that every human being and all peoples have the right to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political development. It reminds us that true progress is not measured solely by economic growth, but by the dignity, equality, and freedom of people.

Today, as we mark four decades of this landmark Declaration, we face new and complex challenges. Climate change is the greatest threat to human rights that accelerating, while conflicts have reached their highest levels since the Second World War. At the same time, the rapid development of artificial intelligence and digital technologies, while offering immense opportunities, also exposes deep biases and inequalities, often reflecting and amplifying discrimination.

These realities underscore the continuing relevance of the right to development. It cannot be realized without meaningful participation of all people, especially women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups in shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

The right to development is not a luxury or an aspiration. It is a universal and inalienable right an essential pillar of justice, peace, and sustainability. For Uzbekistan, this principle lies at the heart of our national reform agenda. Our **Development Strategy "Uzbekistan–2030"** embodies the vision that every person should enjoy the benefits of progress and contribute to the country's transformation.

We see the Sustainable Development Goals and the right to development as mutually reinforcing. Achieving the SDGs in Uzbekistan whether in poverty

reduction, gender equality, quality education, health care, decent work, or environmental protection is inseparable from the realization of human rights for all.

Our top priority is to fundamentally transform the lives of every family and citizen, enhancing human dignity and well-being. Over the past decade, Uzbekistan has reduced poverty from 35 percent to 6.6 percent a remarkable achievement driven by inclusive economic reforms, investment in education and innovation, expansion of green industries, and the creation of millions of new jobs.

Distinguished participants,

As we commemorate this 40th anniversary, Uzbekistan would like to share several reflections and proposals for the way forward:

First, to adopt a **Global Plan of Action on the Right to Development (2026–2030),** aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, to translate the Declaration's principles into measurable commitments and cooperation projects.

Second, to integrate the **Right to Development into emerging global agendas particularly in digital transformation, artificial intelligence governance, and climate finance** ensuring that these transitions advance equality, participation, and human dignity.

Third, to invest in *education and public awareness*, through the creation of **UN-led training programmes** and **youth platforms** to cultivate a new **generation of right-to-development advocates and practitioners**.

Fourth, to **strengthen *international and regional dialogue platforms***, such as the **Samarkand Human Rights Forum**, to share national experiences, best practices, and progress in realizing the right to development.

The 40th anniversary is not only a time to commemorate, but to recommit to make the right to development a living reality for every person, in every nation.

In this spirit, I am pleased to invite all colleagues to the Fifth Samarkand Human Rights Forum, to be held in 2026, marking the **60th anniversary of the International Human Rights Covenants, and 40th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development.** This forum will bring together governments, UN experts, and civil society to discuss how to make the right to development a living reality for all nations.

Thank you for your attention.