The 12th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

Coordination Meeting with Other United Nations Mechanisms on the Right to Development

Palais des Nations, Room XVI, Geneva

Statement by Mr. Zamir Akram,
Chair-Rapporteur of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development

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Distinguished Chair, members of the Expert Mechanism,
Dear participants,

I'm pleased to address you in my capacity as chair rapporteur of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development. I appreciate the opportunity to share this video message for the coordination meeting with other United Nations mechanisms on the right to development.

The 26th session of the Working Group took place in Geneva from 12 to 15 May 2025 and was highly productive. During this session, we held an interactive dialogue with the then Chair of this Expert Mechanism, Isabel Durant, and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, Mr. Surya Deva. We received updates of the wide range of activities, studies and engagement that they have undertaken within their mandate to promote, protect and realize the right to development. We also heard their valuable recommendations for Member States on the actions that should be prioritized in the challenging global context that we have to confront these days. In the spirit of this fruitful cooperation, the Working Group recommended to the Council that we continue to invite the Special Rapporteur and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism to contribute to the work of the Working Group. Our 26th session also featured an interactive dialogue with subsidiary mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies on the theme of children, future generations, and development. This discussion greatly benefited from the insights shared by a member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Hynd AYOUBI IDRISSI, and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, Mr. Surya Deva, along with other independent experts and practitioners.

In addition, the Working Group held four interactive dialogues with experts aimed at addressing divergent views expressed in the group. These dialogues focused on critical topics for the realization of the right to development, and these included: 1. The debt crisis and the right to development; 2. The right to development as a right of peoples, the collective dimension of the right to development; 3. coercive measures and the right to development; and 4. illicit financial flows and repatriation of funds of illicit origin. The discussions were particularly engaging. We had over 20 invited experts providing diverse perspectives, generating considerable discussion and valuable feedback from delegations.

Looking ahead, the Working Group has yet to determine its program of work of its upcoming 27th session, which is scheduled to take place from 18 to 22 May in 2026 in Geneva. However, the Working Group recommended that if we continue to convene interactive dialogue with relevant experts aimed at addressing divergent views expressed in the Working Group. The Working Group also adopted several other recommendations that the Human Rights Council should consider dedicating its next biennial panel discussion on the right to development to be held in 2026 to be the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development. The Working Group, moreover, recommended that it consider the possibility of convening intercessional meetings across various geographical groups and regions to benefit from diverse perspectives and unique regional challenges, and that it holds thematic discussions intra area

on the impact of emerging technologies and digitalization on the right to development, harnessing technology to bridge divides, empowering women and girls and persons in vulnerable situations, and countering disinformation and other new and emerging issues. Finally, the Working Group recommended that the High Commissioner include in his next report on the right to development an analysis of the existing practices and the challenges and obstacles to the realization of that right including unilateral coercive measures the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin, and the impact of the debt crisis with recommendation on how to overcome them, and specific proposals for supporting the Working Group in fulfilling its mandate.

There is ample opportunity for cooperation between the various United Nations mechanisms on the right to development without overlaps and in full respect of each other's distinctive mandates. I therefore look forward to our continued cooperation and coordination of our work with the overall objective of contributing to the full realization of the right to development.

I thank you.

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