13th Session of the Expert Mechanism on right to development, 21-23 April 2026

Item 3: General debate

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

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Mr. Chair,

APG23 reaffirms its commitment to the realization of the right to development as a universal and inalienable human right of individuals and peoples. We also thank the Expert Mechanism for its continued work in promoting the right to development and welcome the focus of this session expressed in the programme of work. Being based in Geneva, we are not able to attend the session in person but would like to contribute to the general debate through this video intervention.

We appreciated all the previous thematic studies of the Expert Mechanism and commend the efforts to develop, in particular, the study on "Peace and Security and the Right to Development" to which we contributed.

Indeed, our world is currently in a deep and persistent turmoil with armed conflicts, geopolitical rivalries, ideological polarization, economic war and the erosion of multilateral cooperation that have combined to create an atmosphere of chronic instability.
From the wars in Ukraine, Iran and the genocide in Gaza, to prolonged conflicts in Sudan, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Sahel, to name a few, violence continues to shape the lives of millions and undermine global peace.
Therefore, we consider the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development study “on Peace and Security and the Right to Development” a very significant and timely initiative.

States continue to spend trillions of dollars in weapons instead of investing such money in humanity and for raising from extreme poverty the billions of people still leaving in it. The current wars have wiped out years of development destroying infrastructures, hospitals, schools etc. and most of all killing many people and children.

2026 marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development and yet, the gap between aspiration and implementation remains stark. Global inequalities are widening, conflicts are increasing, the climate crisis is accelerating, and many communities remain excluded from meaningful participation in development processes.

As an NGO present at grass-roots level in 42 countries in all continents, and involved in the realisation of development projects and promotion of human rights, we affirm that all the current challenges in our world require the adoption of the lens of the right to development and the respect of human rights.

The Right to Development remains vital and urgent in today's world for addressing global inequalities and injustices. It represents an important and necessary move to meet the present and future challenges faced by humanity today, challenges that no country will be able to face alone.

The right to development and human rights should be at the core of the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future implementation to ensure that sustainable development is inclusive, equitable, and centred on human dignity, enabling all people to benefit from global progress.

In fact, the RTD highlights the responsibility of both national governments and the international community to create an enabling environment where all countries can thrive. In this context, it demands reform of the global economic and financial systems to be more inclusive and equitable. It calls for solidarity and global cooperation, restoring multilateralism and emphasizing that development should be universal and not a privilege for a few.

In this regard, we reiterate the urgent need for the adoption of the draft international covenant on the right to development still under scrutiny at the General Assembly in New York, which can be a very relevant tool to hold States and corporations accountable.

Thank You!