Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development
13th Session 21-23 April 2026
New York

General debate

EU Statement

Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We appreciate the opportunity to address the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development.

The right to development is an integral part of the universal human rights framework, and must be realised in full consistency with the universality, indivisibility, interrelation, interdependence, and mutually reinforcing nature of all human rights, with the individual as the rights holder at its centre. Individuals are the central actors, drivers and beneficiaries of development, while States, as the duty bearers, have the primary responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfil all human rights, including the right to development, in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law.

The full and non-discriminatory realisation of all human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social - and just, inclusive, and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing. Therefore, the implementation of the right to development cannot be seen purely through an economic lens, nor can development be considered or interpreted as a pre-condition for the fulfilment of human rights. In other words, the realisation of the right to development cannot be used as a pretext by States not to uphold their human rights obligations.

We are fully committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda, which is our collective, universal, and indivisible roadmap in this regard. We urgently call on the whole UN membership to maintain - or, where necessary, re-establish - its focus on realising the SDGs. We also reaffirm our commitment to the *Compromiso de Sevilla*, which renews the global framework for development financing in support of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Working to realise the right to development, the EU and its Member States are fully dedicated to eradicating poverty in all its dimensions, tackling discrimination and inequalities, and ensuring that no one is left behind, both within and beyond the European Union. Our development cooperation policy and international partnerships place individuals at the centre, in line with the human-rights based approach, recognising that poverty extends beyond income deprivation and impacts on all aspects of life. Frequently, poverty goes hand in hand with multiple violations of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights.

We demonstrate our dedication to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change and conflict by our financial commitments. The EU and its Member States are the world's leading provider of official development assistance, accounting for 48% - or almost half - of all global Official Development Assistance in 2025.

As we have consistently emphasised, the EU supports approaches to the right to development that are grounded in international human rights law and reflect the diversity of views expressed by UN Member States. We plan to engage constructively in the discussions over the next few days, in particular on the two thematic reports, which we have read with interest, and the thematic discussion on the role of regional mechanisms in realising the right to development, in which the Deputy Permanent Representative of the EU will participate as a panellist.

The European Union will continue to ensure that development policies respect, protect, and fulfil human rights, with the individual as the primary actor and beneficiary.

Thank you.