The 13th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

Peace and security and the right to development
Wednesday, 22 April 2026, 11:30 – 13:00

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Peace and security are cross-cutting conditions for the full enjoyment and exercise of human rights, including the right to development.

This is reflected in the Declaration on the Right to Development itself. Its Preamble is clear: "international peace and security are essential elements for the realization of the right to development." It likewise reaffirms "the close relationship between disarmament and development." Articles 5 and 7 of the Declaration translate these principles into concrete State obligations — the very obligations that structure the thematic study our Mechanism is working on, and which I have the honour of authoring.

While the full realization of the right to development depends on a wide range of conditions, this thematic study focuses on three principal State obligations at the intersection of peace, security and the right to development:

The **first obligation** is to ensure the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of peace and inclusive societies. Drawing on the UN Charter itself, peace requires States to settle their international disputes by peaceful means, to strengthen preventive diplomacy and the multilateral system, and to protect the human rights of all persons and peoples under their jurisdiction — without discrimination of any kind.

States must comply with their human rights obligations. Failure to do so creates fertile ground for the outbreak of violent conflicts. Inclusive societies — grounded in substantive equality and the elimination of structural and historical discrimination — are not only a human rights imperative. They are a peace imperative.

The **second obligation** is to ensure general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. States must redirect the resources currently devoted to armaments toward comprehensive development — including education, health, social protection and climate action. Disarmament

helps build confidence among States and facilitates cooperation and solidarity — pillars essential to the protection of the right to development.

States must combat the illicit trade in arms and eliminate weapons with indiscriminate effects or that cause unnecessary suffering. States must likewise advance discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems and artificial intelligence-enabled systems in peace and security.

The **third obligation** is to eliminate massive and flagrant violations of the human rights of peoples and individuals affected by situations of breach of peace and security. Armed conflicts represent a clear impediment to States' ability to fulfil their human rights obligations. In such contexts, more than ever, States remain bound by their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law — compliance with which can play a key role, at least indirectly, in peacebuilding, post-conflict recovery and transitional justice processes.

Putting an end to massive and flagrant violations of human rights requires guaranteeing truth, justice, memory, reparation and institutional reform, as the foundation for any meaningful return to peace.

In fulfilling these three obligations, it is essential to recognize, in a cross-cutting manner, the role of women and youth as agents of peace.

Excellencies,

The thematic study our Mechanism is developing reflects a conviction deeply rooted in the Declaration on the Right to Development: peace and development are indivisible. One cannot exist without the other. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Pact for the Future, and A New Agenda for Peace further reinforce this principle. The normative framework is in place. What this study seeks to contribute is a clear articulation of the State obligations that give that framework concrete meaning — and of the good practices that show it can be done.

We look forward to a fruitful exchange with Distinguished Delegates, and to receiving further inputs until 15 July that will enrich the final version of the study.

Thank you