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

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda
Implementation of the mandate and programme of work –
Focused thematic discussions
Conference Room 6, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Advancing non-discrimination, equality and development for all: 40 years of the right to development and 25 years of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Wednesday 22 April 2026, 16:30 to 18:00

Unofficial transcript of the oral statement by Ms. Isabelle Durant

So happy to have you to discuss all these issues. Maybe you remember and maybe you were there at that time, I don't know, in August 2001, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was convened in Durban, and it was followed by the Programme of Action after the Durban conference.

But the Durban Declaration, as well as the Declaration on the Right to Development, both Declarations affirm that development, non-discrimination and equality are inseparable. Each stresses that development cannot be achieved without the full respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and that discrimination of any kind, whether racial, ethnic, gender based or other, is an obstacle to development. Both Declarations are finally pursuing more or less the same, the similar objective and final goal. So, the discussion today is to celebrate the anniversary of those two Declarations of the same age. But it's important to link both because they are really related to each other, and it's the opportunity in the discussion to really try to take stock of what was made in those two aspects, the right to development and fight against racism or intolerance, take stock of what was done. Maybe look at how we can use this opportunity of anniversary of those two Declarations to look ahead and try to see what can be done in the next period, which is of course, more important than the past, and particularly in a difficult period for all the world in the multilateral system. It was said in the previous discussion, but also in terms of polarisation of the discussion and all context, which could be very difficult for development, but also regarding tolerance, respect of all human rights, fight against discrimination and protection of all the rights and particularly from the most vulnerable people.

So, I stop here because what is important is really to listen to what the speakers have to address the audience, and how we can try together to contribute to this anniversary in a way which is positive, impactful and particularly oriented towards the future.

Thank you.

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