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

The role of regional mechanisms in realizing the right to development

Wednesday, 22 April 2026, 15:00 to 16:30

Concept Note
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Introduction

The Declaration on the Right to Development affirms that "States have the duty to co-operate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development."[1] In this regard, all States not only "should co-operate with a view to promoting, encouraging and strengthening universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without any distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,"[2] but also "should take steps to eliminate obstacles to development resulting from failure to observe civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights."[3] In this regard, the establishment of regional mechanisms aimed at the promotion, protection and/or guarantee of human rights, peace and security, and/or development constitutes a clear expression of international cooperation and multilateralism.

As highlighted in the Pact for the Future, in the face of setbacks, challenges and profound transformations worldwide, there remains, nonetheless, "a moment of hope and opportunity."[4] Precisely for this reason, in such contexts, it is essential to reaffirm and strengthen the commitment that underpins the very existence of regional mechanisms in accordance with international law: the protection of human rights, peace and security, and the development of individuals and peoples. "This is not an option but a necessity."[5]

The Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development (EMRTD) is fully aware that the setbacks, challenges and transformations we face, including those related to the realization of the right to development, "are deeply interconnected and far exceed the capacity of any single State alone,"[6] and therefore must "be addressed collectively, through strong and sustained international cooperation."[7] In this regard, the Expert Mechanism considers that regional mechanisms, in the exercise of their respective functions and mandates, constitute strategic partners for the promotion and operationalization of the right to development of individuals and peoples.

Purposes

1. To identify whether, in the exercise of their functions and mandates, regional mechanisms have integrated, directly or indirectly, the promotion, protection and/or realization of the right to development of individuals and peoples.

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[1] Declaration on the Right to Development, Article 3(3).
[2] *Ibid*., Article 6(1).
[3] *Ibid*., Article 6(3).
[4] Pact for the Future, adopted at the 2024 Summit of the Future, (A/RES/79/1), p. 1.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

2. To highlight the main challenges, obstacles and/or limitations faced—and that may be faced—by regional mechanisms in promoting, protecting and/or ensuring the realization of the right to development of individuals and peoples.

3. To identify the strategies and specific activities that may be implemented by regional mechanisms to further promote, protect and/or ensure the realization of the right to development of individuals and peoples.

Guiding Questions

1. To what extent have regional mechanisms promoted, protected and/or ensured the realization of the right to development through its direct invocation as an autonomous right, or indirectly, through its relationship with other rights (civil and political, economic, social, cultural or environmental), or within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? Can any good practices be identified in this regard?

2. What are the main challenges, obstacles and/or limitations faced by regional mechanisms in promoting, protecting and/or ensuring the realization of the right to development of individuals and peoples? What is the impact of the crisis of the multilateral system on the exercise of their functions and mandates, with regard to their contribution to the full realization of the right to development at the regional and global levels?

3. Forty years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, what strategies or specific activities could be implemented by regional mechanisms to promote, protect and/or ensure the realization of the right to development at the regional and global levels in the short, medium and long term?

Expected Outcomes

1. Regional mechanisms share good practices for the promotion, protection, and/or realization of the right to development, both directly, as an autonomous right, and indirectly, through civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, as well as through the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. Regional mechanisms identify the crisis of the multilateral system, the weakening of international cooperation, and the erosion of respect for international law as the main challenges to the realization of the right to development.

3. Notwithstanding this, regional mechanisms highlight strategies and activities that can contribute to the realization of the right to development at both regional and global levels, including coordinated and strategic work with other stakeholders.

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