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QUESTION OF THE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

GLOBAL CONSULTATION ON THE REALIZATION OF  
THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT AS A HUMAN RIGHT

Geneva, 8 - 12 January 1990

Report prepared by the Secretary-General pursuant  
to Commission on Human Right Resolution 1989/45

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The report on the Global Consultation (E/CN.4/1990/9) will be distributed in several parts.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGING FROM THE GLOBAL CONSULTATION

1. During the course of the global consultation numerous ideas and proposals were brought forward and discussed. It emerged clearly from the Consultation that the subject of the right to development as a human right was related in a complex and interdependent way to many other areas of human activity and that this complex interrelationship was only being gradually understood.
2. With regard to the Consultation itself, numerous participants welcomed the opportunity it provided to focus the attention of an audience reflecting a wide spectrum of world opinion on the problems and challenges posed by the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development. They also welcomed the participation and contribution of a number of agencies and organs of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and its Non-Governmental Organization Liaison Service, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as for the participation of the Organization of African Unity and the Commission of the European Communities.
3. Participants expressed appreciation for the introductory statements made by the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the Chairman of the Working Group of Governmental Experts on the Right to Development; and the Secretary of the NGO Special Committee on Racism and Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization; the presentation made by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, in which he underscored the importance of the integration of human rights into the development process was particularly welcomed.
4. Appreciation was also expressed by the participants for the very valuable contribution made to the consultation by the experts who presented papers on the Consultation's major themes.
5. Appreciation was also expressed for the documents submitted to the Consultation by speakers, participants and observers and in particular for the background paper concerning the development of the principles in the Declaration on the Right to Development in the various United Nations human rights instruments and studies (HR/RD/1990/CONF.1) prepared for the Centre for Human Rights by Tamara Kunanayakam, who was also thanked for her work in preparing the Consultation.
6. Appreciation was also expressed for the various oral and written proposals concerning possible conclusions and recommendations (see for example conference papers 20, 32 and 37); particular appreciation was expressed for the proposals prepared by a number of participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and from indigenous peoples (HR/RD/1990/CONF.32), which offered a useful starting-point for the discussion of concrete recommendations.
7. Many participants expressed disappointment that a number of intergovernmental bodies with special responsibility in the field of

development did not attend, including the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Food Council (WFC), World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and UNESCO. The hope was expressed that they would take a more active role in future programmes and activities for the implementation of the right to development, and expressed the wish that special efforts would be made to inform these bodies of the report and recommendations of the Global Consultation; it was felt that only through the active co-operation of all could progress be made.

8. The specific conclusions and recommendations set out below found a wide echo among the participants. They are not exhaustive nor do they necessarily fully reflect the views of all the participants or the organizations represented. They may well provide the Commission on Human Rights and other United Nations bodies with a basis for considering action. This is a first step towards a better understanding of the right to development as a human right and the complexity of the subject will require much further analyses and discussions.

#### A. Conclusions Emerging from the Consultation

##### 1. The content of the right to development as a human right

9. The right to development is the right of individuals, groups, and peoples to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy continuous economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized. This includes the right to effective participation in all aspects of development and at all stages of the decision-making process; the right to equal opportunity and access to resources; the right to fair distribution of the benefits of development; the right to respect for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to an international environment in which all these rights can be fully realized. All of the elements of the Declaration on the Right to Development, including human rights, are complementary and interdependent, and they apply to all human beings, regardless of their citizenship.

10. Development is not only a fundamental right but a basic human need, which fulfill the aspirations of all people to achieve the greatest possible freedom and dignity, both as individuals and as members of the societies in which they live.

11. The human person is the central subject rather than a mere object of the right to development. The enjoyment of all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights is both the necessary condition and aim of the right to development. Thus, States must not only take concrete steps to improve economic, social and cultural conditions and to facilitate the efforts of individuals and groups for that objective, but must do so in a manner that is democratic in its formulation and in its results. A development strategy that disregards or interferes with human rights is the very negation of development.

12. Recognition of the right to development and human rights in the national legal system is not sufficient in itself. States must also ensure the means for the exercise and enjoyment of these rights on a basis of equal opportunity.

13. Democracy at all levels (local, national and international) and in all spheres is essential to true development. Structural inequalities in international relations, as within individual countries, are obstacles to the achievement of genuine democracy and a barrier to development as defined by the Declaration. Fundamental to democratic participation is the right of individuals, groups, and peoples to take decisions collectively and to choose their own representative organizations, and to have freedom of democratic action, free from interference.

14. A major goal of democracy is to achieve a just social order. To be fully effective, democracy itself depends upon the existence of a just and democratic social order, including a fair distribution of economic and political power among all sectors of national society, and among all States and peoples and on the employment of such rights as freedom of expression, freedom of association and of free elections.

15. The concept of participation is of central importance in the realization of the right to development. It should be viewed both as a means to an end and as an end in itself. Measures formulated to promote the right to development must focus on the democratic transformation of existing political, economic and social policies and structures which are conducive to the full and effective participation of all persons, groups and peoples in decision-making processes. Special measures are required to protect the rights and ensure the full participation of particularly vulnerable sectors of society, such as children, rural people, and the extremely poor, as well as those which have traditionally experienced exclusion or discrimination, such as women, minorities, and indigenous peoples.

16. Participation, if it is to be effective in mobilizing human and natural resources and combatting inequalities, discrimination, poverty and exclusion, must involve genuine ownership or control of productive resources such as land, financial capital and technology. Participation is also the principal means by which individuals and peoples collectively determine their needs and priorities, and ensure the protection and advancement of their rights and interests.

17. The right to development is related to the right to self-determination, which has many aspects, both individual and collective. It involves both the establishment of States and the operation of States once they have been established. The mere formation of a State does not in itself fully realize the right to self-determination, unless its citizens and constituent peoples continue to enjoy the right to their own cultural identity and to determine their own economic, social and political system through democratic institutions and actions, and the State genuinely enjoys continuing freedom of choice, within the bounds of international law. Universal respect for the principle of the non-use of force, is a fundamental condition for the full realization of the right to development.

2. Human rights and development strategy

18. The struggle for human rights and development is a global one that continues in all countries, "developed" and "developing", and must involve all peoples, including indigenous peoples, national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, as well as all individuals and groups. International implementation and monitoring mechanisms must be of universal applicability.

19. Development strategies which have been oriented merely towards economic growth and financial considerations have failed to a large extent to achieve social justice; human rights have been infringed, directly and through the depersonalization of social relations, the breakdown of families and communities, and of social and economic life.

20. Development strategies which have relied too heavily on a centrally planned command economy, have excluded participation and have not provided opportunities for individuals and groups to take an active part in the economic life of the country have also often failed to achieve the realization of the right to development.

21. What constitutes "development" is largely subjective, and in this respect development strategies must be determined by the people themselves and adapted to their particular conditions and needs. No one model of development is universally applicable to all cultures and peoples. All development models, however, must conform to international human rights standards.

22. The world's future can only be ensured if the global environment is adequately protected and restored. In addition, all cultures and peoples form part of the common heritage of humankind and have a dignity and value that must be respected. Both environmental and cultural considerations should therefore be an integral part of national, regional and international development strategies.

23. Indigenous peoples have been throughout history the victims of activities carried out in the name of national development. Their direct participation and consent in decisions regarding their own territories are thus essential to protect their right to development. In this regard, attention was drawn to the conclusions and recommendations of the "Seminar on the effects of racism and racial discrimination on social and economic relations between indigenous peoples and States", held at Geneva on 16-20 January 1989 (HR/PUB/89/5).

24. In order to reverse the situation of growing inequalities in the world, affirmative action in favour of the disadvantaged groups and increased assistance to disadvantaged countries will be required. The removal of barriers to economic activities, such as trade liberalization, is not sufficient.

25. Peace, development, and human rights are interdependent. Respect for and realization of human rights through the process of development is essential to national stability and the promotion of international peace and security. Development policies that disregard human rights, or which foster regional or international disparities, contribute to social, political and other conflicts and endanger international peace. The United Nations, based on the Charter's mandate to ensure international peace and security thus has a major stake in the promotion of a development which respects human rights.

26. The United Nations should take the lead in implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development. This means setting up mechanisms for ensuring the compatibility of all United Nations activities and programmes with the Declaration, according to its letter and intent. Development must be equitable from the viewpoint of the peoples, groups, and individuals affected.

3. Obstacles to the implementation of the right to development as a human right

27. Failure to respect the right of peoples to self-determination, and their right to permanent sovereignty over natural resources is a serious obstacle to the realization of the right to development as a human right.

28. Massive and flagrant violations of human rights, and such phenomena as racial discrimination, apartheid and foreign occupation are also serious barriers preventing the realization of the right to development as a human right.

29. Disregard for human rights and fundamental freedoms and in particular the right to development can lead to conflict and instability, which in turn may undermine the economic conditions needed for development through phenomena such as the diversion of resources to military or police forces, capital flight, the demobilization of human resources, increased national dependence, indebtedness, involuntary emigration and environmental destruction.

30. Democracy is an essential element in the realization of the right to development and the failure to implement and respect the principles of democratic government has been shown to present a serious obstacle to the realization of the right of development.

31. The adoption of inappropriate or destructive development strategies, sometimes on the pretext that human rights must be sacrificed in order to achieve economic development, has been a further obstacle to the realization of the right to development. Prevailing models of development have been dominated by financial rather than human considerations. These models largely ignore the social, cultural and political aspects of human rights and human development, limiting the human dimension to questions of productivity. They foster greater inequalities of power and control of resources among groups and lead to social tensions and conflicts. These tensions and conflicts are often the pretext used by States to justify placing restrictions on human rights, freedom of association, action, and participation, and this in turn intensifies conflicts and perpetuates the denial of the right to development. Corruption is also an obstacle to the realization of the right to development.

32. Transfer of control of resources located in developing countries to interests in developed countries which intensified in the 1980s is another obstacle to development. Similarly, the growing burden of indebtedness and structural adjustment falls heaviest on the poorest and weakest sectors of society and has clear human rights implications.

33. Failure to take into account the principles of the right to development in agreements between States and the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and commercial banks with regard to external debt repayment and structural adjustment, frustrates the full realization of the right to development and of all human rights. The prevailing terms of trade, monetary

policy, and certain conditions tied to bilateral and multilateral aid, which are all perpetuated by the non-democratic decision-making processes of international economic, financial and trade institutions, also frustrate the full realization of the right to development as a human right.

34. Other obstacles to development can be found in the concentration of economic and political power in the most industrialized countries, the international division of labour and the functioning of the Bretton Woods institutions, the "brain drain" due to growing disparities in wages and income levels among countries, the restrictions on transfers of technology, certain forms of protectionism, and the adverse effects of the consumption patterns of the more industrialized countries. The implementation of the declaration on the right to development should seek to overcome these obstacles.

35. Lack of communication between specialists in human rights, social development and economics, within the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations missions and national Governments, the academic community and non-governmental organizations, has impeded a full understanding of the Declaration of the Right to Development and its implementation.

#### 4. Criteria which might be used to measure progress

36. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, the Declaration on the Right to Development and other international human rights instruments constitute the basic framework for formulating the criteria for determining progress in the implementation of the right to development as a human right.

37. The formulation of criteria for measuring progress in the realization of the right to development will be essential for the success of future efforts to implement that right. Such criteria must address the process of development as well as its results; quality as well as quantity; the individual as well as social dimension of human needs; and material as well as intellectual and cultural needs. Both objective and subjective measurements must be included in any analysis.

38. These criteria for the right to development may be grouped under the following headings: conditions of life; conditions of work; equality of access to resources; and participation.

39. Conditions of life include basic material needs such as food, health, shelter, education, leisure and a safe and healthy environment as well as personal freedom and security. Care should be taken to account for quality as well as quantity. Food may be available abundantly, but may be nutritionally poor or culturally inappropriate. Schools may be numerous and free but respond only to material and economic objectives, and fail to provide an education which promotes the knowledge, the critical awareness, the analytical capability and the creativity necessary to enable human beings to shape their own environment.

40. Conditions of work include employment, extent of sharing in the benefits of work, income and its equitable distribution, and degree of participation in management. These factors relate not only to the amount of work and its

remuneration, but also to the quality of work, worker control, and subjective elements of satisfaction and empowerment.

41. The degree of equality of opportunity of access to basic resources, as well as the fair distribution of the results of development are essential criteria for measuring progress in the implementation of the right to development. Relevant indicators therefore must include the relative prices, accessibility, and distribution of factors of productive resources such as land, water, financial capital, training and technology.

42. Significant inequalities in the enjoyment of these conditions and resources of development, whether they exist among regions, ethnic groups, social classes, between men and women, or among different States, are incompatible with the right to development, in particular if they increase over time. Special attention therefore must be paid to the disaggregation of national statistics by relevant categories such as sex, ethnicity, socio-economic sectors and geographic regions.

43. Since participation is the right through which all other rights in the Declaration on the Right to Development are exercised and protected, the forms, quality, democratic nature, and effectiveness of participatory processes, mechanisms and institutions is the central and essential indicator of progress in realizing the right to development. At the international level, this applies to the equality and democratic character of intergovernmental bodies, including financial and trade institutions.

44. Relevant factors in assessing participatory processes include the representativity and accountability of decision-making bodies, the decentralization of decision-making, public access to information, and responsiveness of decision-makers to public opinion. The effectiveness of participation must also be assessed from a subjective perspective, based on the opinions and attitudes of the people affected - in other words, their confidence in leaders, feeling of empowerment, and belief that they are affecting decisions.

45. Participation is also the primary mechanism for identifying appropriate goals and criteria for the realization of the right to development, and assuring the compatibility of development activities with basic human and cultural values. This must be an on-going process at the local, regional, national and international levels, since the goals of development must be established for each level of development activity.

46. Publication of the criteria for measuring progress in implementing the right to development and the results of the evaluation of their usefulness is important to stimulating effective participation in the development process.

## B. Recommendations for Action Emerging from the Consultation

### 1. Action by States

47. All States engage in activities affecting the development process, both internally and in their relations with other States and peoples. The creation of national and international conditions in which the right to development can be realized fully is a responsibility of States, the international community, and of all peoples, other groups, and individuals.

48. All States should take immediate and concrete measures to implement the Declaration on the Right to Development. In particular, national policy and development plans should contain explicit provisions on the right to development and the realization of all human rights, especially the strengthening of democracy, together with specific criteria for evaluation. They should also identify the needs of groups which have experienced the greatest difficulties in access to basic resources and set specific goals for meeting their needs; establish mechanisms for ensuring participation in periodically assessing local needs and opportunities; and identify obstacles requiring international assistance or co-operation.

49. All States should take the necessary steps to strengthen their juridical systems including ensuring access by all on a non-discriminatory basis to legal remedies; particular attention should be paid to ensuring access to justice of the extremely poor and other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

50. All States should ensure that corporations and other entities under their jurisdiction conduct themselves nationally and internationally in a way that does not violate the right to development.

51. All States which have not yet done so should ratify the principal instruments in the field of human rights, in particular the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Discrimination in Education, as well as the relevant conventions of the International Labour Organisation, including Convention No. 87 (Freedom of Association), Convention No. 98 (Right to Organize), Convention No. 141 (Rural Workers) and Convention No. 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples).

52. All States should renew their commitment to the implementation of the United Nations declarations which have been adopted in the field of social development, in particular the 1969 Declaration on Social Progress and Development, the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies on Women, Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging, the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons, Guidelines for Further Planning and Suitable Follow-up in the Field of Youth, decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders,

53. All States should co-operate in creating an international economic and political environment conducive to the realization of the right to development, in particular through the democratization of decision-making in intergovernmental bodies and institutions that deal with trade, monetary policy, and development assistance, and by means of greater international partnership in the fields of research, technical assistance, finance and investment.

54. There is also a need for greater transparency in negotiations and agreements between States and international financial and aid institutions. This must include the publication and widest possible dissemination of proposed and final agreements concerning financial aid, credit, debt, repayment, and monetary policy.

## 2. International Action

55. The international community must renew its efforts to combat massive and flagrant violations of rights, racism and apartheid, and all remaining forms of colonization, foreign occupation. Existing United Nations machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights must be further strengthened and additional resources provided to the Centre for Human Rights.

56. All United Nations activities (policy, operations, and research) related to the development process should have explicit guidelines, appraisal criteria, and priorities based upon the realization of human rights, including human rights impact assessments. Impact assessments should address the possible adverse effects of the proposed activity, temporary and long-term, on the full enjoyment of human rights by any sector of the national society; the contribution of the proposed activity to the full enjoyment of human rights by the population affected; and the establishment of participatory mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

57. Implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development should be co-ordinated by the Centre for Human Rights, with at least one full-time specialist devoted to this task. Effective co-ordination should also include a full-time liaison officer on the staff of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation in New York, regular discussions within United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in the Administrative Committee for Co-ordination and the Committee for Development Planning, and the establishment of focal points for the right to development and human rights in each development-related United Nations programme and agency.

58. United Nations bodies and specialized agencies should be requested to review their mandates and identify those areas of their activity and responsibility which are related to the right to development and other human rights. In addition, United Nations bodies and agencies, including related financial and trade institutions, should respect the International Covenants on Human Rights and other basic conventions in the field of human rights as if they themselves were parties.

59. United Nations supervisory bodies in the field of human rights, such as the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, should include special comments and recommendations regarding the right to development in their review of the periodic reports of States parties.

60. The Secretary-General should appoint a high level committee of independent experts from Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Western Asia, South and South East Asia, and the Asia-Pacific regions, with relevant direct experience in human rights and development, and serving in their personal capacities, to report annually to the General Assembly through the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council, on progress made in the implementation of the Declaration at the national as well as international levels, based on information requested from Governments, intergovernmental bodies, and non-governmental organizations, as well as information received from all other sources. The Committee in carrying out

its activities should ensure the effective participation of non-governmental organizations and groups active in development and human rights, including indigenous peoples, workers organizations, women's groups, and other organizations.

61. The high level committee of experts should give priority to the formulation of criteria for the assessment of progress in the realization of the right to development; recommendations for a global strategy to achieve further progress in the enjoyment of this right; examination of reports and information regarding internal and external obstacles to its enjoyment, including as appropriate the role of transnational corporations; the identification of activities which may be incompatible with the right to development; and promoting wider knowledge and understanding of the right to development as a human right.

62. The design of appropriate indicators of progress should also be undertaken by the regional economic commissions, on the basis of national experience and in co-operation with the Commission on Social Development, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, International Labour Organisation, other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies with relevant expertise and national universities. This process should also include the effective participation of representative organizations of disadvantaged and vulnerable peoples and groups, as well as workers organizations and other organizations engaged directly in development programmes in the field.

63. All United Nations system assistance and co-operation should be provided through an overall programme of assistance which would facilitate monitoring, co-ordination and implementation of the right to development. This programme should include specific requirements regarding all aspects of the right to development in an appropriate environmental and cultural framework and should be drawn up with each country.

64. Successful implementation of the Declaration through United Nations system programmes and activities depends critically on the direct participation of representatives of the people and groups directly or indirectly affected through their own representative organizations, at all levels of decision-making. The United Nations overall assistance programme with individual countries should contain specific requirements regarding the establishment of mechanisms for assuring effective participation in their implementation and review.

65. The high level Committee should initiate a programme of development education with particular emphasis on reaching grassroots organizations working in the field of development at the community and local levels. This should include regional meetings on practical problems of implementation such as mechanisms for ensuring and evaluating participation, methods for the assessment of progress in the enjoyment of the right to development, and ensuring sensitivity to issues of gender and culture, to facilitate dialogue among development agencies, international financial institutions, Governments, and the peoples and communities concerned. The Centre for Human Rights, International Labour Organisation, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the regional economic commissions and other specialized agencies should take part in this programme.

66. Further research and studies should be undertaken within the United Nations system on strategies for the realization of the right to development, and criteria for assessing progress. This could include consultations at the regional level with independent experts and with representative organizations such as workers organizations, including trade unions, and peasant organizations.

67. The report and recommendations of the Global Consultation should be taken into account in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, and should be placed on the agendas for the 1990 Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to International Economic Co-operation for Development, the 1990 United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

68. This report, its recommendations, and conference papers should be published and given the widest possible distribution as a contribution to the debate on this complex subject. This should be done as part of the World Information Campaign for Human Rights, and in co-operation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations University, and national universities. Particular efforts should be undertaken to disseminate this report to workers organizations, including trade unions, in co-operation with the International Labour Organisation, and to grassroots organizations in the fields of development and human rights. Effective use should be made of electronic as well as print media.

69. The Declaration on the Right to Development should be given the widest possible distribution in as many local languages as possible and should be published together with an explanation and commentary accessible to the general public.

70. The General Assembly should organize periodically a plenary debate on international co-operation for the full realization of the right to development, beginning if possible at its 45th session.

71. The question of the implementation of the right to development as a human right should be placed on the agenda of the First and Second Committees of the Economic and Social Council and of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly on an annual basis.

### 3. Action by non-governmental organizations

72. Non-governmental organizations in the fields of human rights and development should make efforts to exchange information and co-ordinate, both within the United Nations system and in the field, and in particular with regard to the elaboration, implementation and assessment of national development plans.

73. Non-governmental organizations should play a leading role in the dissemination of information about human rights, including the right to development, and in stimulating national-level awareness and discussion in "developed" and "developing" countries alike.