

**OIC INDEPENDENT PERMANENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT  
ABU DHABI, 12-13, OCTOBER 2016  
ABU DHABI DECLARATION ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

OIC<sup>1</sup> Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), in collaboration with the Government of United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) held its Annual Seminar on the subject of “*Right to Development (RtD)*”, in Abu Dhabi on 12-13, October 2016.

Besides Commission Members, relevant international experts from United Nations, OHCHR as well as representatives of OIC Member and Observer States including their National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) participated in the Seminar. In addition to comprehensive presentations made by the experts/ panellists, participants of the Seminar had in-depth discussion on various aspects of the RtD to identify conceptual and implementation gaps including various limiting factors and suggested ways and means for its full and effective realization both at national and international levels.

Based on the comprehensive deliberations and concrete recommendations during the Seminar, IPHRC concluded the following as the outcome of the Seminar:

**Welcomed** the opportunity of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of adoption of the historic “*Declaration on the Right to Development (DRtD)*” for a renewed reflection and joint action by all stakeholders including States and Non-State actors, regional and international organizations, civil society and corporate sector to ensure that all people have equal opportunity to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social and cultural rights that also lead to establishment of inclusive, equitable, just and peaceful societies.

**Acknowledged** that the adoption of DRtD is a milestone achievement in the quest to realize the promise of ‘*freedom from fear and want*’ guaranteed in the International Bill of Rights and aptly highlighted in various other regional and international human rights instruments such as OIC Charter and Ten-Years Program of Action, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Arab Charter on Human Rights, the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Millennium Declaration, the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These instruments affirm that the RtD is a human right on a par with all other human rights.

**Expressed** concern that, despite passage of three decades and umpteen reaffirmations of this right in international instruments, the goals of the DRtD have not been achieved. Also supported the call made by most developing countries to transform the Declaration into a

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<sup>1</sup> Organization of Islamic Cooperation

binding International Convention on the Right to Development.

**Highlighted** the Islamic concept of development and social protection based on the egalitarian principles of compassion and solidarity with fellow Muslims and humanity. Also, reaffirmed that the teachings of Holy Quran and traditions of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) categorically forbid exploitation, concentration of wealth and oppression in all its forms and manifestations.

**Affirmed** that the RtD is an indivisible and interdependent, interrelated and mutually inclusive individual and collective right, which belongs to all individuals and peoples in all countries without discrimination on any grounds, including foreign and colonial occupation.

**Further reaffirmed** that States have obligations at three levels for effective implementation of RtD: (a) internally, through the formulation of national development policies and programs affecting persons within their jurisdictions; (b) internationally, through the adoption and implementation of policies extending beyond their jurisdictions; and (c) collectively, through global and regional partnerships. Furthermore, all human beings have a responsibility for development, individually and collectively, taking into account the need for full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as their duties to the community, which alone can ensure free and complete fulfilment of the human being.”<sup>2</sup>

**Recalled** (a) the importance of fighting against corruption, which continues to plague countries across all geographical regions and seriously undermines as well as adversely affects people’s human rights including the RtD; (b) the importance of good governance and active, free and meaningful participation in the development, realization, and the assessment of the RtD policies.

**Urged** all Member States and other stakeholders to uphold policy coherence and to follow a human rights-based approach in all development processes ensuring participation, accountability, non-discrimination, equality and equity in consistency with international human rights standards at national, regional and international levels.

**Reiterated** that while development is a State led process, global interconnectedness and contemporary challenges warrant international cooperation in the spirit of “the collective responsibility of the international community to ensure the attainment of the minimum standards of living necessary for the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons throughout the world”. The General Comment No.3 of the UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights obligates State Parties to international cooperation for development for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights for all at all levels.

**Further reiterated** that the Declaration’s mandate for international cooperation and equitable distribution of development benefits, including those resulting from globalization, also require that technology and scientific innovation which can play a role in the fulfilment

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<sup>2</sup> DRtD Article 2

of human rights should be equitably shared in a manner that takes into account the needs of the most vulnerable. SDG 17 on the global partnership for sustainable development is essential to realizing all the SDGs. Its effective implementation must be on the RTD approach, which is anchored in the duty to cooperate.

**Noted** that developing countries including many OIC Member States, as part of a globalized world, are confronted with unprecedented challenges in the scientific, climatic, technological, political, security, demographic and socio-cultural arenas, which require them to “cooperate with each other in eliminating obstacles to development and ensuring broad based sustainable development” for all.

**Reaffirmed** that the RtD remains a priority area both for the OIC and OIC-IPHRC. Undertook to continue to work for wider acceptability, implementation and realization at national, regional and international levels to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights both by the individuals and peoples in all countries without discrimination on any grounds.

**Appreciated** the on-going OIC initiatives of Strategic Health Programme of Action 2014 – 2023; establishment of Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) as well as on-going projects of Islamic Solidary Fund (ISFD) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB) that have contributed meaningfully in complementing the efforts of many Member States in promoting sustainable development. Also, urged ISFD to scale up the impact of interventions through microfinance support, vocational training and food security to vulnerable segments of the society. At the same time urged OIC Member States to redeem their pledges and announce new commitments in favour of ISFD. Furthermore, urged relevant OIC Organs, including IDB, to take full advantage of IPHRC’s advisory expertise and explore avenues for developing joined projects and cooperation, including in the field of the RtD.

**Expressed** concern that despite overbearing importance of the RtD and availability of combined financial and human resources, emphasis on practical implementation of the RtD among most OIC Member States remains less pronounced. The challenges of terrorism, illiteracy, poverty, pandemics and environmental disasters remain omnipresent threats.

**Urged** the OIC Member States to take concrete and urgent actions to (a) reinvigorate political will and to raise the level of commitment and support from all stakeholders for unhindered implementation of the RtD; (b) mainstream human rights and the RtD norms into development plans and ensure system wide coherence to bridge implementation gaps; (c) strengthen inclusive and transparent institutional framework, which responds coherently and effectively to current and future development challenges at all levels; (d) strengthen international cooperation with multilateral development institutions to address persistent challenges and create linkages with the on-going international initiatives like SDGs taking into account national circumstances and priorities; (e) institutionalisation of universal access to social services to address and reduce inequality and social exclusion which are essential for eradicating poverty and advancing development goals; (f) work for peaceful resolution of disputes, combat terrorism, invest in social development, create inter-linkages and mainstream human rights and the RtD consistently in respective national development plans;

(g) concrete measures in order to widen civil society space and their engagement in development process and in ensuring the effective implementation of the RtD.

**Further recommended** to OIC Member States to undertake coordinated and accelerated actions, in accordance with the commitments made in the revised OIC Charter and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ten Year Plan of Action 2025 to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance, rule of law, democracy and accountability in their countries; (b) create sound policy frameworks, at national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies to support accelerated investments in poverty eradication programs; and (c) promote cooperation among Member States to achieve sustained socioeconomic development and effective integration in the global economy, in conformity with the principles of partnership and equality.

**Underscored** the importance of full access to quality education at all levels as a pre requisite for the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, and for full participation of all people, in particular the youth, persons with disabilities as well as ethnic minorities and people living in rural areas, and other vulnerable groups in national development plans and strategies. The need to promote gender equality, equity, and women empowerment through their full and effective participation in sustainable development policies, programmes and decision-making at all levels which was also stressed as a contributing factor towards meaningful realization of RtD.

**Recognized** that the efforts to achieve the RtD are not merely a charitable work, but the empowerment initiatives and inclusive engagements through transfer of knowledge and skills. Also recognized the critical role of innovative technologies and media and encouraged States to foster collaboration among the academic, scientific and technological community to bridge the technological gap and establish knowledge based economies to avoid the vicious poverty trap.

**Emphasized** the need for enhanced capacity-building and skill development, exchange of experiences and expertise as well as transfer of knowledge, technology and technical assistance for capacity-building among the Member States and with multilateral partners.

**Welcomed** creation of the mandate of UN Special Rapporteur on the RTD during the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of Human Rights Council and urged the mandate holder to work for system wide mainstreaming of the RtD and its fulfilment in the context of 2030 SDGs especially in the context of implementation of common but differentiated responsibilities reaffirmed in section 12 of the SDG Declaration. The mandate holder may also review the Final List of proposed Sustainable Development indicators to conduct impact assessment of various development policies and strategies on the realization of the right to development.

**Recalled** the importance of using indicators for measuring the disparities at the national, regional and international levels against the implementation of the DRtD with a view to taking corrective measures to removing obstacles and ensuring development at all levels without discrimination. Encouraged OIC member States to develop these indicators in

cooperation with the OIC General Secretariat for appropriate use.

**Recommended** that all countries to pay particular attention to and integrate the principles and norms of the RtD as stipulated in the DRtD in their implementation of the SDGs and follow-up to the 2030 Development Agenda. Countries may also include a section on the implementation of the RtD in their national report to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda as well as to the UPR of the HRC.

**Recognized** the contribution and important role of the OHCHR in promotion and realization of the RtD and accordingly requests the OHCHR to develop targeted capacity building programs for policy makers, corporate sector and civil society to raise awareness about its utility as a mutually beneficial right as well as to mainstream the concept at all levels.

**Encouraged** OIC countries to support the work of the OHCHR including through dedicated / earmarked financial contributions to its work in integrating RtD considerations in the work of the UN human rights mechanisms, UN system agencies and in the efforts of Member States to implement the 2030 Development Agenda.

**Appreciated** the ongoing work done by the HRC Intergovernmental Working Group on the RtD but expressed concern on the continued lack of progress due to intransigence of some Member States to recognize the well-established linkage of RtD with actions taken at international level as well as its scope that covers both the individual and collective rights.

**Recommends** all stakeholders to adopt a practical and realistic approach to the issue of development, which should focus on overcoming the involved challenges and obstacles in a gradual manner starting from immediate implementation of universally accepted core development goals, such as overcoming poverty, hunger and the scarcity of water, and promoting housing, education and gender equality.<sup>3</sup> To this end took note of the standards proposed for each of these development goals in the report of the Chair-Rapporteur of the IGWG on the RtD which should be given serious considerations as a framework for action for achieving these goals. Meaningful results on each of these goals would pave the way for eventual achievement of the broader goals of the global development agenda.

**Urged** the International community to take firm steps to overcome the political hurdles involved in the full and effective realization of the RtD. States must make best efforts individually and collectively to implement the RtD in line with the UN Charter provisions of international cooperation for meaningful promotion of socio-economic progress for all. Also urged to maintain the RtD as a permanent item in its program of work.

All participants expressed gratitude to the Government of the UAE for hosting the IPHRC Seminar on the RtD as well as for extending cordial hospitality.

**Issued at Abu Dhabi**

**13<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

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<sup>3</sup> Article 8 of DRtD