
There is no single model of development valid for all peoples, at all times-Ambassador Kunanayakam

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Ambassador Tamara Kunanayakam affirms: "There is no single model of development valid for all peoples, at all times" The right to development is a universal and inalienable human right, an integral part of our human heritage, which is as much a prerogative of States as it is of individuals. Speaking at an event to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Right to Development organized by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Countries and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, Ambassador Tamara Kunanayakam, as Chairperson/Rapporteur of the United Nations Working Group on the Right to Development, reminded the international community that the Declaration recognizes "the human person, both individually and collectively, as the central subject of development" and that "there is no single model of development valid for all peoples, at all times. The realization of the right of peoples and States to determine their own economic, political, social and cultural systems, without externally imposed conditionalities, is a prerequisite for the realization of all other human rights". She recalled that the historic principles contained in the Declaration rest on sources of legality and that the basic principles can be traced back to the 1955 Bandung Conference of African-Asian States, the new concept having entered the UN debate through the Non-Aligned Movement. For newly independent States, political independence from colonial rule had not brought with it the promised economic independence or social wellbeing. Externally driven development strategies focusing on growth rather than on people and an international division of labour that favoured the dominant powers had further exacerbated socio-economic disparities and the external dependence of developing countries. The international corollary of the sovereign right to determine one's own model of development, in all its dimensions, is the sovereign equality of States in international relations and a shared responsibility that goes beyond mere international cooperation to encompass international solidarity to create a just and equitable international economic order without which it is not possible to realize the right to development. Pointing to the unprecedented rise in inequalities in recent years and a spectacular growth in the gap between the developed and developing countries, she expressed deep concern about the continued gross and systematic violations of this intrinsic human right. Between 1998 and 2002, 25% of the world's poorest saw their share of revenue decline from 1,16 % to 0,92%, whereas 10% of the world's wealthiest increased their share from 64,7 % to 71,1%. The top 20% of the richest countries account for 86% of the world's overall gross domestic product, whereas the bottom 20% - the poorest - are left with only 1%, which, at the current rate, "will take more than 800 years for the bottom billion of the world population to achieve 10 per cent of global income." At a time that the founding texts of the United Nations System are being challenged in a number of domains and are being considered by certain countries as being obsolete and archaic, Ambassador Kunanayakam underlined the continued validity, and in a sense, the modernity of the right to development, a fortiori, in the context of today's multiple systemic crises that is affecting the poorest and the most vulnerable, particularly in the developing countries. Regretting that despite the numerous efforts undertaken since 1981 to implement the right to development, to identify the obstacles, and to monitor progress, this fundamental human right was far from being realized, the Ambassador emphasized the need to revisit the original intent of the drafters of the Declaration and the principles and human values upon which those principles were based. She warned the international community, "if we are not to lose our credibility, we must have the courage to conduct an honest and critical evaluation of the reasons for the continued, systematic and gross violation of the Right to Development as defined in the Declaration and intended by the drafters, draw the consequences, and take collective action, in the common interest." "Such an exercise," said the Ambassador, "is no longer an option; it is a necessity and an obligation!" [Full statement attached] Statement by H.E. Tamara Kunanayakam, Ambassador/Permanent Representative, Chairperson/Rapporteur, Working Group on the Right to Development At the Round Table Discussion "the Right to Development: constraints and perspectives" organized by the OIC, NAM and OHCHR 19TH October 2011 Distinguished chairs of the OIC and NAM, Excellency Director-General of the UN, Excellencies, and Panelists, First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank the Organisation of Islamic Countries and the Non-Aligned Movement, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, for organizing this discussion and providing an opportunity to share insights and concerns on a fundamental universal and inalienable human right, the right to development. Many contributions reflect on the importance, the continued validity, and in a sense, the modernity of the right to development, a fortiori, in the context of today's multiple systemic crises that is affecting the poorest and the most vulnerable, particularly in the developing countries. Prior to considering future perspectives, it is essential to reflect on what it was that its drafters sought to achieve; whether, twenty five years later, we are any closer to that achievement; if not, why?; and, how do we move forward? The 25th anniversary of this Declaration is an opportune moment for such an exercise. I wish to recall that the historic principles contained in the Declaration, rest on sources of legality, and that the concerns reflected in the instrument are primarily those of developing countries. The new concept entered the UN debate through the Non-Aligned Movement, and the basic principles can be traced as far back as the 1955 Bandung Conference of African-Asian States. For the newly independent States, political independence from colonial rule had not brought with it the promised economic independence or social wellbeing. Externally driven development strategies focusing on growth rather than on people and the international division of labour had further increased socio-economic disparities and external dependence. It was during this period, that new concepts emerged giving rise to the right to development, defined as comprehensive, global, multidimensional, structural, and dynamic, in which the human person, individually and collectively, is the central subject, thus recognizing that there is no single model of development valid for all peoples, at all times. The realization of the right of peoples and States to determine

their own economic, political, social and cultural system, without externally imposed conditionalities, also gained recognition as a prerequisite for the realization of all other human rights. It is in this context must be seen the adoption of instruments in the 1950s, 60s and 70s establishing its international corollary – sovereign equality of States and a shared responsibility, going beyond international cooperation to encompass international solidarity, to create a just and equitable international economic order without which it is not be possible to realize the right to development, which is as much a prerogative of States as it is of individuals. Since 1981, various efforts have been made to formulate measures to implement the right to development, identify obstacles to its realisation, and to monitor progress. The 1990 Global Consultation, an independent expert and three separate working groups have worked tirelessly toward the same goal. Despite these efforts, gobalization has forced the exertion of the cumulative crises onto developing countries and the poorest and most marginalized communities. In recent years, there has been an unprecedented rise in inequalities and a spectacular growth in the gap between the developed and developing countries. Between 1998 and 2002, 25% of the world's poorest saw their share of revenue decline from 1,16 % to 0,92%, whereas 10% of the world's wealthiest increased their share from 64,7 % to 71,1%. The top 20% of the richest countries account for 86% of the world's overall gross domestic product, whereas the bottom 20% - the poorest - are left with only 1%. At the start of this week, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty asserted that “At the current rate, it will take more than 800 years for the bottom billion of the world population to achieve 10 per cent of global income.” If we are not to lose our credibility, we must have the courage to conduct an honest and critical evaluation of the reasons for the continued, systematic and gross violation of the right to development, as defined in the Declaration and intended by the drafters, draw the consequences, and take collective action, in the common interest. Such an exercise is no longer an option; it is a necessity and an obligation!