

# Research Report

Forum: Historical Development Committee  
Issue: Declaration on the right to development  
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## Introduction

In this committee we will go back to 1986, when the United Nations recognised the Right to Development. The Right to Development was first officially recognised in 1981 in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, in which it was stated that "All peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind." The United Nations sought to further legitimise this right by adopting it for itself. Now, the delegates of the Historical Development Committee are tasked with writing up their own Declaration on the Right to Development with one caveat; the existing Declaration may not be copied.

It is thus up to the delegates to take the Right to Development and extend it from Africa to the world. In this process, they have to interpret the right of development and give it meaning. They have to describe what it means and what it doesn't mean, set goals to achieve these meanings, and as well as formulate plans and strategies to achieve those goals.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Development

Cambridge Dictionary defines development as "The process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced"

A bit more extensive explanation is given in a preambulatory clause of the Declaration on the Right to Development: "*development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom.*"

### Human Rights

Human rights are moral principles or norms, which describe certain standards of human behaviour, and are regularly protected as legal rights in municipal and international law.

-Wikipedia

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. -Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

## History

On 26 November 1957 the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 1161 (XII). In this resolution, the General Assembly expressed the view that "a balanced and integrated economic and social development would contribute towards the promotion and maintenance of peace and security, social progress and better standards of living, and the observance of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

This theme was taken up at the International Conference on Human Rights, held in Tehran (Iran) in 1968. The Conference expressed its belief that "the enjoyment of economic and social rights is inherently linked with any meaningful and profound interconnection between the realization of human rights and economic development." And it recognized "the collective responsibility of the international community to ensure the attainment of the minimum standard of living necessary for the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons throughout the world."

In 1969 the Declaration on Social Progress and Development was adopted by the general assembly in its resolution 2542 (XXIV). This declaration states that "social progress and development shall aim at the continuous raising of the material and spiritual standards of living of all members of society, with respect for and in compliance with human rights and fundamental freedoms."

In 1977, the UN Commission on Human Rights decided to pay special attention to consideration of the obstacles impeding the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights. Recognizing that the right to development should be a human right, the Commission requested the UN Secretary-General to undertake a study on "the international dimensions of the right to development as a human right in relation with other human rights based on international cooperation." This study was submitted and considered by the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-fifth session in 1979.

The Commission subsequently, by its resolution 36 (XXXVII) of 11 March 1981, established a working group of 15 experts to study contents of the right to development and the most effective means to ensure the realization in all countries. Besides this, it also requested the Working Group to submit a report with concrete proposals for implementation of the right to development.

Later that year the right to development was recognized in Article 22 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights as a definitive individual and collective right. Article 22(1) states: "All peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind."

## The original declaration

The UN General Assembly passed The Right to Development by a vote of 146 in favour, 1 against and 8 abstentions (mostly developed countries). The United States is the only country that voted against the declaration. Some of the nations that highly favoured it were Australia, Canada, France, The Netherlands and New Zealand.

## Questions and things to consider

- The debate takes place in 1986. Keep this in mind when researching your country, referring to past events, and behaviour in the debate.
- We are writing a declaration, not a resolution. As such, proposed additions are not bound by signal words and may be written freely.
- We are writing a declaration interpreting a right, not solving a clearly apparent problem. This means that the issue itself is wide open to interpretation by delegates and that we, as chairs, cannot provide you a detailed sketch.
- Delegates should pay particular attention to identifying problems and coming up with strategies on how to tackle them.

## Possible subject matter

- Economic development. Remember the cold war is still on, and socialism vs market economics is a looming debate. What is the best way for developing countries to achieve prosperity?
- Public health: AIDS is a new health crisis, which around this time in history was causing life expectancy in Africa to drop significantly. How can we best control diseases?
- Food security: This debate takes place after some of the worst famines Ethiopia has ever experienced with eight million victims and a million fatalities. The famine is probably best known for the song "Do They Know It's Christmas?" What would be the best way to prevent famines, or if that fails, to combat them?
- Social development: How do we best guide the political and social development of countries into representative democracies? How can developed nations assist? How do we best safeguard human rights in many parts of the world?

## Useful links and Documents

- Declaration on the Right to Development
  - <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r128.htm>
- Wikipedia
  - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right\\_to\\_development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_development)
  - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_rights\\_and\\_development#The\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Right\\_to\\_Development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_and_development#The_Declaration_on_the_Right_to_Development)
- United Nations document on the right to development

- [http://www.un.org/en/events/righttodevelopment/pdf/rtd\\_at\\_a\\_glance.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/events/righttodevelopment/pdf/rtd_at_a_glance.pdf)

## Bibliography

Wikipedia Human rights and development:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_rights\\_and\\_development#](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_and_development#)

Wikipedia Right to development: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right\\_to\\_development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_development)

Background on the right to development:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/Pages/Backgroundrtd.aspx>

The Right to Development at a glance:

[http://www.un.org/en/events/righttodevelopment/pdf/rtd\\_at\\_a\\_glance.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/events/righttodevelopment/pdf/rtd_at_a_glance.pdf)

The Declaration on the Right to Development and Implementation (Khurshid Iqbal):

<http://www.politicalperspectives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/CIP-2007-01-10.pdf>

Declaration on the Right to Development: <http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/drd/drd.html>

Cambridge Dictionary: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/development>

Wikipedia Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Human\\_Rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights)

Wikipedia Human Rights: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights)