



ASHAH RAZYN FOUNDATION (U)

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

What are human rights?

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.

Universal human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

Development as a human right

Human rights and development continue to reflect a separate evolution. It makes an obvious, but nevertheless underappreciated point:

Human rights are the subject of binding international legal obligations and their relevance to development can be understood in light of this. Obstacles confronted in integrating human rights in development may be to be rooted in a neglect of the normative and legal dimensions of human rights, which in turn point to opportunities for greater convergence and coherence around international legal frameworks.

However, human rights and development are also inextricably linked. They have the same ultimate objective to improve human well-being and freedom, based on the inherent dignity and equality of all people.

Human rights and development policies and strategies are mutually reinforcing and complementary. Whereas development will focus on social welfare and on economic growth,

human rights established a universally accepted legal regime that conceptualizes rights in terms of 'duty bearers' and 'rights holders'.

A human rights based approach to development hence bases on the empowerment of citizens, the demand for delivery of the rights and services which they are entitled to, while at the same time developing the capacity of states to fulfill the obligations to protect, respect and promote the rights of their citizens.

The strategic use of human rights in development policies is therefore a powerful tool in the strengthening of bottom up and participatory approaches to empower specifically vulnerable groups.

Beyond the rights based approach, there is a growing understanding that poverty reduction and related indexes are directly impacted by the non-respect of certain political human rights. For example, female genital mutilations, as well as other forms of violence against women, have a direct impact on maternal health.

In 2000, the world leaders formally acknowledged the link between human rights, development and governance with the adoption of the 2000 Millennium declaration. Human rights are accordingly essential to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Everyone is “entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized,” the groundbreaking UN Declaration on the Right to Development proclaimed in 1986 that development is a right that belongs to everyone.

However, this has not been achieved because many states are carrying out mass forced evictions that drive slum dwellers even deeper into poverty whilst violating a whole range of their rights, including adequate housing, water, sanitation and health.

Human Rights and Development in a detailed overview

It belongs to everyone

Like all human rights, the right to development belongs to everyone, individually and collectively, with no discrimination and with their participation.

The right to development puts people at the centre of the development process which aims to improve “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 the resulting benefits.

A right that addresses contemporary challenges

Widening poverty gaps, food shortages, climate change, economic crises, armed conflicts, rising unemployment, popular unrest, and other pressing challenges confront our world today.

The right to development, which embodies the human rights principles of equality, non - discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability as well as international cooperation, can guide our responses to a series of contemporary issues and challenges.

The right to development is not about charity, but enablement and empowerment.

Way forward

- Governments need to stop paying lip service to human rights and make it central to the sustainable development agenda; otherwise targets are being achieved at the expense deepening inequalities, discrimination and injustice. There is a widening gap between rich and poor and between men and women and those from minority groups.
- When development processes fail or result in human rights abuses and violations, governments, financial institutions, international donors and corporations must be held to account. The right to remedy is crucial.

- Unless world leaders commit to placing human rights at the heart of the development agenda, we cannot achieve real change. It is time for world leaders to deliver.