

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 57th SESSION

### Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development

18 – 19 September 2024

**Mr Surya Deva, Special Rapporteur on the right to development**, presented his **reports on the right to development of children and future generations, as well as on a country visit to Vietnam**.

There are many challenges to the realization of human rights such as environmental pollution, climate change, conflicts, food insecurity, disruptive new technologies, and the debt crisis. It is paradoxical that while **children and future generations are not responsible for creating the challenges, they will bear a disproportionate impact on their right to development**. Despite all the legal standards and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, one in three children worldwide lack access to basic services such as healthcare, nutrition, education, and social protection. About 200 million children below the age of 5 are still affected by undernutrition. Over 600 million children are at a heightened risk of vector-bound diseases and more than 460 million children are living in or fleeing from conflict and at least 1 billion children suffer from the consequences of violence every year. Although the declaration on the right to development does not expressly mention children, the reference to the right to development in relation to every human person and all people includes children. States, UN entities, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, national human rights institutions, businesses, and other actors should focus on five action pillars, and these are investing in child development, nurturing responsible leadership, enabling participation, ensuring safety, and facilitating remediation. Focusing on **future generations**, the SR stressed that the definition should refer to all organisms not merely human beings, including plants, animals, lakes, and rivers. Taking seriously the human rights of future generations will require decision-makers at all levels to identify and present any adverse impacts or present-time decisions on the rights of future generations or their ability to realize those rights.

In conclusion, he **recommended four policy shifts** to build an ecosystem supportive of the human rights of future generations. 1) the language of rights not of needs or interests should be used for future generations. 2) the principle of intergenerational equity should be embedded in impact assessment and human rights due diligence processes of the states, multilateral development banks, businesses and other actors and the precautionary principle should be followed. 3) all present time decision makers should create an enabling environment to facilitate the participation of future generations, representatives and decision making. And 4) financial planning and budgeting should be reoriented to build the economic capability of future generations to realize their right to development.

Further, in *the report of the country visit to Vietnam*, the SR highlighted that Vietnam has made impressive progress in achieving economic development and implementing social security programs; as well as advances in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in several areas such as reducing poverty, improving access to clean water and sanitation, developing resilient infrastructure and fostering innovation. Considering that Vietnam is highly exposed to climate change impacts, the government should work with development partners and environmental human rights defenders to build resilience and achieve a just transition towards a green economy. He concluded the report with several recommendations to improve the collection of accurate, consistent, and disaggregated data to measure progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal targets.

**Viet Nam (Country concerned)** affirmed that the Government places **people** at the center of development strategy as owners, driving forces, and beneficiaries while consistently promoting and protecting human rights, including the right to development. It emphasized Vietnam's strong

commitment to the following: 1) prioritizing investment in human capital, science and technology and innovation, upgrading infrastructure to improve productivity, developing a green and circular economy and building resilience against natural disasters and climate change. 2) enhancing socialism-oriented market institutions, fostering public administration reform, and promoting the participation of vulnerable groups in decision-making processes. 3) further reforming the social protection system to strengthen the resilience of communities and support vulnerable groups. 4) stabilizing macroeconomic fundamentals, mobilizing and enhancing the efficient use of financial resources for sustainable development. 5) improving the availability of data to enhance the monitoring of progress to work toward the achievement of the SDGs and 6) engaging all stakeholders and collaborating with all partners to achieve the goal for all by 2030.

### Interactive dialogue

65 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **The majority of the countries** agreed with the SR that the right to development from the perspective of children has to date received inadequate attention. Children worldwide continue to face numerous challenges, lack of access to education and care, malnutrition, human trafficking, sexual violence and exploitation, and injuries and deaths during armed conflicts hinder the ability to fully enjoy the right to development. **Countries** also shared with the Council national priorities, actions, and legal regulations and frameworks to protect and promote human rights, including the rights of children. The **EU** affirmed that prioritizing child rights is not just a moral imperative but also a prerequisite for achieving the SDGs. Human rights need to be fully integrated into actions and policies addressing the current global challenges exacerbating the vulnerabilities of children. **Pakistan, Kuwait, UAE, the Arab Group, Jordan, and the OIC** focused on the recognition that armed conflict poses major challenges to children exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and creating new ones. As is the case in illegally occupied Palestine, particularly Gaza where thousands of children have been killed by the occupation forces. **Iran and a group of countries** focused on the profound impact that new technologies are having on the realization of the right to development for both current and future generations must be addressed. New technologies can help us bridge gaps in knowledge, skills, and resources directly contributing to reducing inequalities and fostering human development.

**Several countries, including Iran, Venezuela, and the Syrian Arab Republic** considered the UCMs as an obstacle to the full realization of the right to development and human rights. The UCMs negatively affect also future generations and threaten the territorial integrity of countries.

**FAO** ensured that all individuals, especially children, have access to adequate and nutritious food, a fundamental aspect of the right to development. FAO's framework on ending child labor in agriculture fully aligns with the international labor conventions on child labor and its elimination, acknowledging that hunger, agricultural development, and birth are closely interlinked. **UNICEF** concurred with the SR that achieving the SDG would go a long way to securing the right to the development of children. Globally the scale of underinvestment in children is deeply concerning. Called on states to accelerate SDG implementation and put children's rights at the heart of the SDG, to comply with the obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of every child without discrimination and to recognize children as subject of rights and empowered agents in the exercise of their rights.

**NGOs** agreeing with the SR's report, concluded that the current global challenges, climate change, conflicts, the debt crisis, or food insecurity all have a disproportionate impact on both children and women. In the absence of proper and equal access to nutritious food, water, education, housing, and health facilities, the right to development cannot be realized. One in three children lack access to such basic services. As **Save the Children International** affirmed, children must have access to child-friendly

information, justice, and effective remedies when their rights are violated. The **Center for International Environmental Law** affirmed that human rights mechanisms have reiterated that the states have obligations vis-a-vis future generations, including with regard to the right to a healthy environment. It also regretted that the current version of the pact of the future and declaration on future generations do not include rights language on future generations.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (65 country delegations):

*Lithuania (on behalf of the Baltic-Nordic States), EU, Pakistan (on behalf of the OIC), Qatar (on behalf of the GCC), United Arab Emirates (on behalf of the Arab Group), Uganda (on behalf of the NAM), Gambia (on behalf of the African Group), Iran (on behalf of the Group of Countries), Holy See, Kuwait, Sri Lanka, Qatar, Luxembourg, Oman, Brazil, Jamaica, Iraq, Colombia, Jordan, Algeria, Panama, Cote d'Ivoire, Honduras, Ecuador, Eritrea, Bahrein, Egypt, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Iran, Paraguay, Cuba, Russian Federation, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Cameroon, Venezuela, Senegal, Ethiopia, China, Mali, Tunisia, Timor Leste, South Sudan, Angola, Djibouti, Benin, Armenia, Cambodia, Syrian Arab Republic, India, Sudan, Rwanda, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Spain, LAO PDR, Niger, Saudi Arabia, Vanuatu, Dominican Republic.*

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (12):

Human Rights Commission of Zambia, National Independent Commission of Burundi, Make Mothers Matter, Save the Children International, Jameh Ehyagan Teb Sonnati Va Salamat Iranian, Medical Support Association for Underprivileged Iranian Patients, Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, Sikh Human Rights Group, Iran Autism Association, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), International Planned Parenthood Federation, International Council of Russian Compatriots (ICRC).

International Organizations (2): FAO, UNICEF.

To watch the full meeting refer to the UN WEB TV: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).