

Joint Oral General Statement To Be Delivered In Conjunction With the 14th Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development – 13-17 May 2013

Working Group of Catholic Organizations on the Right to Development and International Solidarity: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities), Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), International Institute of Mary Our Help of the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco, International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education, Development, International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education, and New Humanity.

Role of Experts

This group of co-signing organizations welcomes the decision of the Members of the Intergovernmental Working Group to invite input from experts associated with various UN Agencies. We would like to invite these experts to present the parameters used by their respective agencies to measure progress and results in achieving the Right to Development in addition to presenting their special views on specific sub-criteria. Such input could facilitate the task of the Intergovernmental Working Group to develop well focused and human rights-based parameters aimed at supporting the criteria and sub-criteria related to the Right to Development.

Indicators/Parameters

As can be noted in the Declaration on the Right to Development, this right can be approached from an objective or international perspective, and a subjective or person-centered perspective. The co-signers believe that parameters aimed at measuring progress and results in the achievement of the Right to Development through internationally established criteria and sub-criteria should reflect the above-mentioned characteristics. In this regard, the group also suggests that the Intergovernmental Working Group adopt general and internationally effective parameters, leaving the responsibility to States to indicate specific national sub-parameters aimed at better responding to the needs of each specific population/country. For example, if access to treatment is recognized as one of the general parameters related to the criterion “health”, States should be requested to indicate national sub-parameters in accord with national need, that will demonstrate achievement of the general parameter “access to health” within the overall criterion “health”. This Intergovernmental Working Group would be expected to set up the general parameters, help States to develop nationally focused sub-parameters related to the specific parameter, and, once every 4 years, to verify progress and results in the achievement of sub-parameters and parameters, and to discuss with the respective State about best ways to accomplish its tasks.

Appeal

The group of co-signers recognizes that decisions taken at the international level must be approached with caution. But such caution should not be used as an excuse to avoid taking such decisions, especially in regard to the Right to Development. Our role, the role of NGOs directly involved with the poorest members of society, is to speak on behalf of such people during the course of deliberations by this Intergovernmental Working Group and by other UN bodies and agencies. We are here to speak on behalf of a homeless person living in a developed country who needs assistance in order to become an active part of the society; we are here to speak on behalf of an HIV-positive child living in a developing country who needs child-friendly fixed-dose combinations adapted for use in his/her local environment. But your role – which is fundamental – is to arrive at effective responses. People in grave need cannot wait for years and years; they need immediate actions. During your discussions about the effective realization of people- and person-centered development, we invite you to constantly keep in mind that, behind such discussions, there are people in need, and they await your decisions. In few words: please, remember the people.