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## Human Rights Council

### The Social Forum

Geneva, 1 – 3 October 2012

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of the decision of the Human Rights Council, contained in paragraph 6 of its resolution 19/24, that the 2012 session of the Social Forum should focus on the theme of people-centred development and globalization**

## **Background report submitted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights\***

### *Summary*

The present report focuses on people-centred development and globalization, the theme of the 2012 Social Forum established by Human Rights Council resolution 19/24. It elaborates on people-centred development and global governance in an era of multiple challenges and social transformation; promoting measures and actions for participatory development and democratic governance; and enhancing a globally enabling environment for development. The report also contains a summary of inputs received from Member States and other stakeholders. The conclusions propose issues for further consideration by the 2012 Social Forum, which will be held from 1 to 3 October 2012, in Geneva.

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\* Late submission.

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## I. Introduction

1. As decided by the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 6/13, the Social Forum<sup>1</sup> serves as a unique space within the United Nations for interactive dialogue among the representatives of Member States, the United Nations human rights machinery, intergovernmental organizations and various stakeholders, including civil society and grassroots organizations, on issues relating to the national and international environment needed for the promotion of the enjoyment of all human rights by all.

2. At its nineteenth session, the Council considered the report of the 2011 Social Forum (A/HRC/19/70) and adopted resolution 19/24, in which it decided that the 2012 Social Forum should focus on the theme “People-centred development and globalization”, and in particular: (a) people-centred development and global governance in an era of multiple challenges and social transformation; (b) promoting measures and actions for participatory development and democratic governance, including through the role of civil society and social movements at the grass-roots, local and national levels; (c) enhancing a globally enabling environment for development, including through the international financial system, which should support sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, sustainable development and hunger and poverty eradication in developing countries, while allowing for the coherent mobilization of all sources of financing for development.

3. The present report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 19/24, in which the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to consult all actors identified in the resolution on the above-mentioned issues, and to submit a report as a background contribution for the dialogues and debates to be held at the 2012 Social Forum from 1 to 3 October 2012 in Geneva. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) addressed on 3 May 2012 note verbales to Member States and letters to other stakeholders named in resolution 19/24, requesting input for inclusion in the present report. Contributions were received from Bahrain, Colombia, Greece, Spain; the Defensoría del Pueblo de Panamá, the Ombudsman for the Defense of Human Rights (PDDH) of El Salvador, the National Human Rights Commission of India, the National Human Rights Institution of Nicaragua, South African Human Rights Commission; the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations; the Council of Europe; the Agence de diffusion de droit international humanitaire en Afrique Centrale (ADDIHAC), the Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG 23), ATD Fourth World, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), the Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IIMA), the NGO Committee on Financing for Development, Social Justice in Global Development, Women Sport International and Women’s Sport Foundation; and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

## II. People-centred development and global governance in an era of multiple challenges and social transformation

4. In an interdependent world faced by interconnected crises and phenomenal change, the resounding calls for dignity, democracy and freedom echo the urgent need to address global challenges for the well-being of all peoples, and the Earth, our common home.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Social Forum, see [www.ohchr.org/EN/issues/poverty/sforum/pages/sforumindex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/issues/poverty/sforum/pages/sforumindex.aspx).

People from all walks of life wherever they may live are in one way or another affected by the global economic, financial, food, energy, climate and other crises facing humanity as a whole, with the most vulnerable bearing the greatest burden. In moving towards social transformation, society must be guided by the principle that respect for human rights, based on human dignity, is the ultimate foundation upon which rests the legitimacy of the actions of Governments, international institutions, corporations, business enterprises, and civil society. In a globalized world, their actions - and inactions - touch the lives of people across the globe such that the global and the local levels can hardly be distinguished. In this context, global development and global governance must be bound by the international obligations to which all States have committed, and by which all States are bound.

5. When “the peoples” of the United Nations came together as one collective of humanity under the Charter of the United Nations, building on the interlinked pillars of human rights, peace and development, they spoke in one voice, inspired by a collective resolve to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of large and small nations. They committed themselves to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom and to use international cooperation to solve international problems and to ensure respect for rights and freedoms. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, States recognized that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They affirmed that everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which rights and freedoms could be fully realized, and that everyone has duties to the community.

6. The subsequent years witnessed the progressive development of international law in the field of human rights. For example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child included obligations of international cooperation between States which were further elaborated upon in general comments. Complementing these instruments, scholars have contributed to the advancement of extraterritorial obligations related to economic, social and cultural rights – resulting in the Limburg Principles, the Maastricht Guidelines, and most recently the Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States, which address positive and negative aspects of State obligations to people beyond their national borders.

7. Widespread environmental destruction has led over the years to an ecological crisis, bringing the environment to the centre of global challenges. The notion of sustainable development which incorporates economic, social and environmental dimensions for meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations, has repeatedly arisen in the international development agenda, most recently at the United Nations Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development.

8. Inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth can only take place when human beings become the central concern of development. The 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development recognized that, “human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature”.<sup>2</sup> As reflected therein and affirmed in the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, “the right to development should be fulfilled so as to meet equitably the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations”.<sup>3</sup>

9. Since the 1990s, the promotion and protection of human rights and the further mainstreaming of human rights in development programming have gained considerable

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<sup>2</sup> For details, see E/CN.17/1997/8.

<sup>3</sup> For details, see A/CONF.157/23.

prominence in the work of the United Nations. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action states that “the human person is the central subject of development” and further demanded States to “cooperate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development”.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, at the conclusion of the World Summit for Social Development, held in March 1995 in Copenhagen, Governments adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action which represented a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development.<sup>5</sup> In accordance with the Declaration, the 117 heads of Governments pledged to work for the eradication of poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of stable, safe and just societies for the overriding objectives of development.

10. The Millennium Declaration upholds the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility, and presents an enlightened vision for globalization with people at its core. Paragraph 5 states: “We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. [...] Thus, only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable”.<sup>6</sup> The outcome document of the World Summit 2005 also reaffirmed that “development is a central goal in itself and that sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental aspects constitutes a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities”.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the Secretary-General’s 2005 report entitled “In larger freedom” reaffirmed the inseparable link between development and human rights, asserting that we will not enjoy development without respect for human rights, and we will not enjoy human rights without development.<sup>8</sup>

11. Despite all these commitments, and decades of growth and globalization, millions of people continue to live without democracy, freedom, and dignity. The message from civil society declared in the streets and echoed around the world by new communications technologies and social media is that development is about freedom from fear and from want, for all people, without discrimination. In spite of the interdependence of human rights, peace and development, in practice development has been viewed as synonymous with economic growth and measured in material terms only, most notably by the gross domestic product of countries. The adverse effects and shortfalls of the neglect of all other dimensions of development built up incrementally over the years, leading to a confluence of crises including large-scale poverty and inequality.

12. In this context, the Ombudsman for the Defence of Human Rights (PDDH) of El Salvador, in his contribution to the present report, shared El Salvador’s experience of the development model implemented in Latin America, which they said failed to benefit people. The Ombudsman stated that this failure occurred because they worked with a limited notion of development, which was only “equated to wealth creation or economic growth”. Such a limited notion of development does not conform with human rights principles, and may prevent people, the rightful beneficiaries of development, from enjoying its fruits. For example, the National Human Rights Commission of India noted that high rates of economic growth experienced in India did not reach “all sections of society and in all parts of the country equitably.” Following a country mission to Timor-Leste, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights asserted

<sup>4</sup> For details, see A/CONF.157/23.

<sup>5</sup> For details, see A/CONF.166/9.

<sup>6</sup> For details, see A/RES/55/2.

<sup>7</sup> For details, see A/RES/60/1.

<sup>8</sup> For details, see A/59/2005.

the importance of “inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth”. She warned that “a harsh reality of entrenched poverty and rising inequality hides behind rapid macroeconomic growth indicators” and demanded social and economic policies that ensure the enjoyment of human rights by the whole population.<sup>9</sup>

13. An innovative approach that addresses the need for new measures of development has been introduced by the Government of Bhutan. By presenting the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index, as opposed to the present GDP-based system, Bhutan aims to gauge the happiness and well-being of its people and give equal importance to non-economic aspects of their wellbeing.<sup>10</sup> The concept of GNH has developed around four pillars: (1) good governance, (2) sustainable socio-economic development, (3) cultural preservation, and (4) environmental conservation.<sup>11</sup> At the global level, the Inclusive Wealth Index (IWI), comprised of a set of indicators designed to measure sustainability beyond the traditional economic and development yardsticks of gross domestic product (GDP) and the Human Development Index (HDI), was recently launched by the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (UNU-IHDP) together with the United Nations University and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).<sup>12</sup> Examples of holistic approaches to development can also be found in Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which have framed their Constitutions around the idea of *Buen Vivir* (living well), which calls for sustainable development, peace and harmony.<sup>13</sup>

14. The Kingdom of Bahrain referred to its financial and economic policies which are shaped according to the guiding principles of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. This Vision is based on three interlinked pillars that involve investing in the future with a firm foundation for economic prosperity, reaching a high level of competitiveness in the global economy and creating a broad base of prosperity where every individual is given the means and presented with the opportunity.

15. Many challenges to human rights like climate change, natural disasters, epidemic disease, unemployment, migration, displacement, violence and war, human trafficking and the dumping of toxic wastes transcend national borders, threaten the lives and livelihoods of millions and undermine objectives of social justice, peace and security. Such problems call for holistic, international solutions. According to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “the right to development responds to contemporary challenges. The gradual transition to a single global economy calls us all to our common humanity and our common but differentiated responsibilities. Reform for more democratic, inclusive and participatory global economic governance will promote an enabling environment for development”.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the United Nations Independent Expert on human rights and solidarity, Virginia Dandan, has argued that contemporary challenges “require a change of mindset in the way decisions are made, and how actions are taken, to recover and rediscover the time-honoured common values of humanity such as solidarity, which are the vanguards in the boundary between order and chaos”.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For details, see [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12271&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12271&LangID=E).

<sup>10</sup> For details, see [www.gnhc.gov.bt/](http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/)

<sup>11</sup> For details, see [www.2apr.gov.bt/images/BhutanReport\\_WEB\\_F.pdf](http://www.2apr.gov.bt/images/BhutanReport_WEB_F.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> The Inclusive Wealth Report 2012 is downloadable at:  
<http://api.cld.me/2k0k300R1W0A422j0U1i/download/IWR%20Lo-Res.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Jorge Ishizawa, *Development dialogue*, no. 59, June 2012, p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11583&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11583&LangID=E).

<sup>15</sup> Statement of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, Virginia Dandan, on International Human Solidarity Day, 20 December 2011, available at:  
[www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/intldays/solidarity/Dandan-Message.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/intldays/solidarity/Dandan-Message.pdf).

16. In its contribution to this report, the Council of Europe advocated transformation to a development paradigm that accentuates the dignity of people by reinforcing their independent social, political and economic choices, leading to the fulfilment and enjoyment of their rights. Globalization has often been accompanied by economic liberalization, privatization and deregulation of finance, trade and investment which are often at the expense of human rights. In this context, the National Human Rights Institution of Nicaragua stated that while economic globalization provided new opportunities for development, it also created new dangers and marginalized certain countries, groups and individuals. In this regard, scholars have remarked that the right to development can act as a bridge between developing and developed countries, by informing policies in such areas as climate change, foreign aid, trade, access to medicines, investment, technology transfer, and debt relief.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, “a focus on the right to development may assist people to realize that globalization is a political, public and contestable process, rather than an unstoppable force that will inevitably overtake all States”.<sup>17</sup>

17. The recent global financial crisis illustrates the risk posed by underregulated and interdependent financial systems. According to the Government of Colombia, responding to the financial crisis will require important reforms in the global financial architecture. Colombia emphasized that such reforms should focus on strengthening existing institutions by improving their governance and rendering them more equitable. It recommended that States demand increased engagement of the private sector because private sector influences are pervasive in the economic, social, environmental and political spheres. The importance of the private sector was also emphasized by the South African Human Rights Commission, which stressed the need to hold the private sector accountable for respecting human rights.

18. People-centred development demands the reconceptualization of globalization and development as more than just economic processes, taking account also of their social, cultural political and environmental dimensions, and of the imperatives of human rights, including the right to development. Globalization describes a process by which all States, peoples and institutions are becoming increasingly interconnected. This process need not be detrimental provided that it occur in the context of a human rights-based approach to development.

### **III. Promoting measures and actions for participatory development and democratic governance**

#### **A. Participatory development**

19. Participation is a necessary component of a human rights-based approach to development and globalization. Indeed, the concept of active, free and meaningful participation is a key element of the right to development. Participation helps ensure that people are given their rightful place at the centre of development. According to the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, “participation is a key human right and it is also essential for the effectiveness of development policies. From a human rights perspective, in the design and implementation of development programmes, attention must

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<sup>16</sup> Vitit Muntarbhorn, “The right to development as a bridge-builder for globalization”. The report is downloadable at: [www.fes.de/gpol/pdf/rtd\\_muntarbhorn-comment.pdf](http://www.fes.de/gpol/pdf/rtd_muntarbhorn-comment.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> See Anne Orford, “Globalization and the right to development”, in Philip Alston (ed.), *Peoples’ Rights*, Oxford University Press (2001), pp. 127-184.

be paid to the participation of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of society such as ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities”. In their submissions for this report the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the NGO ATD Fourth World similarly emphasized the importance of participatory development. According to ATD Fourth World, “the fruits of development and globalization are the least shared by people living in extreme poverty, while the negative impact disproportionately affects them and their livelihoods” and development will only be effective through “the participation of all people, including the very poorest” because “people living in extreme poverty have the most in-depth knowledge of extreme poverty and development issues, because they experience it day by day”.

20. Participatory development is exemplified by, *inter alia*, cooperative societies, which are people-centred business models intended to contribute to poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration. Such cooperatives can play a role in the promotion of human rights. They can promote social inclusion and cohesion by empowering poor and marginalized groups. They can help promote gender equality and the social and economic empowerment of women. Recognizing their importance, the General Assembly declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives and adopted the theme “Cooperative enterprises build a better world”.<sup>18</sup>

21. For this report, Governments, national human rights institutions, United Nations agencies and NGOs all shared other examples of participatory development. The Government of Spain described its Economic and Social Committee as one such example. This Committee is composed of 61 members representing various sectors of society, including labour unions, businesses, consumer organisations, cooperatives and agricultural and maritime sectors. The South African Human Rights Commission claimed that implementation of South Africa’s programme to improve access to water and sanitation succeeded because of participatory meetings between Government officials, industry representatives and the poor.

22. In its submission, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs called for the removal of barriers to participation. It stated that “together with participation, social cohesion and solidarity are fundamental for development and social progress, and efforts to develop and reinforce institutions and mechanisms encouraging social integration must be sustained”. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in its input highlighted the significance of “participatory decision-making processes” while taking note of the fact that 925 million persons were suffering from hunger.

23. The Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG 23) shared a successful experience involving its participation-oriented development projects in Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. According to APG 23, the Rainbow Project, its care programme for orphans and vulnerable children empowered vulnerable families through access to microcredit, creating an effective people-centred development model. Community participation played a key role in successful implementation of the project as potential beneficiaries directly involved people living in extreme poverty in planning and decision-making.

24. An innovative approach to women’s empowerment through active participation in sports was introduced by two NGOs – Women Sport International and Women’s Sports Foundation. These organizations noted that “opportunities to partake in a self-chosen active lifestyle and pursue positive embodiment have been shown to make marked contributions in girls”.

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<sup>18</sup> For information, see: <http://social.un.org/coopsyear/global-launch.html>.



## B. Democratic governance

25. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action recognized that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The principle of democratic governance, articulated in article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is vital to an enabling environment for sustainable, equitable and inclusive development. The achievement of development and human rights is especially dependent on democratic governance in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations and in transition to democracy, where conditions of peace and security need to be restored. The building of democratic governance requires the collective efforts of States, civil society, businesses, the international community and individuals.

26. States and other relevant stakeholders should consider democratic governance in the context of people-centred development and globalization. In its “Civil Society Declaration to UNCTAD XIII”, a group of NGOs argued that “human rights can only be fully exercised if States and institutions are democratically accountable”.<sup>19</sup> The call for heightened human rights accountability has been emphasized by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, who said, “we must foster policy coherence and systemic integration of human rights, including the right to development, across sectors, across institutions and across layers of governance. Human aspirations for well-being can be realized only when there is a strong accountability framework”.<sup>20</sup>

27. The Ombudsman for Defence of Human Rights (PDDH) of El Salvador stated that it is critical to achieve “a true democratic governance beyond electoral democracy”. This contribution further stated that governance should “be characterized by full respect for human rights, transparency, accountability, the promotion of social participation, efficiency and continuous improvement”, and urged Governments to eradicate bad practices such as secrecy, corruption, bureaucracy and patronage. Similarly, the Defensoría del Pueblo de Panamá perceived the abuse of power by those in public office as a barrier to development, and asserted the need to empower civil society organizations in order to eliminate such bad practices.

28. Bad practices such as corruption can be major impediments to democratic governance. In welcoming the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption<sup>21</sup>, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated: “Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish. ... Corruption is a key element in economic underperformance and a major obstacle to poverty alleviation and development”. By taking active measures to eliminate corruption and improve democratic governance, States can promote an environment conducive to people-centred development.

## C. Social movements

29. Throughout history, people have sought fundamental changes in their societies through social movements. Human rights solidarity has served to mobilize oppressed peoples in search of common ends, including in the struggles against racism, apartheid,

<sup>19</sup> For details, see Civil Society Declaration to UNCTAD XIII : Executive Summary (TD/463).

<sup>20</sup> For details, see: [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11583&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11583&LangID=E).

<sup>21</sup> General Assembly resolution 58/4.

foreign occupation, colonial domination, dictatorial regimes and other flagrant violations of human rights. Recently, we have seen a broad range of measures taken by people to achieve social justice and to realize their rights and freedoms. The accumulated grievances of people in the face of injustice have provoked broad struggles for political and social transformation. This is reflected in the waves of democratic movements witnessed since the beginning of 2011 in the Arab region. Social movements such as the “Arab Spring” and “Occupy” movements are an expression of people’s discontent with the perceived injustice and inequities of existing processes of governance and development.

30. The Arab Spring, for example, demonstrated the capacity of youth and social media to mobilize civil society and catalyse change. According to 21-year-old Hend Nasiri in Yemen, “the revolution is driven by the youth. It has given us hope and it has brought us together to demand our rights”. Ms. Nasiri co-established organizations to raise awareness about human rights, including the “right to education, to a nationality, to universal social security [and] to health care”.<sup>22</sup>

31. The Agence de diffusion de droit international humanitaire en Afrique Centrale (ADDIHAC) expressed its special interest in young people, in particular their right to education. It argued that education allows young people to take charge of and ensure their empowerment in society and to be responsible for themselves, their families and communities. ADDIHAC further emphasized that solidarity and respect for human dignity can contribute to the success of true development.

32. With regard to recent social movements, the social media deserve particular attention. The role of social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Flickr have provided a vehicle for people to channel their demands and claim their rights. Social media helped activists to organize peaceful protest movements and publicize their struggles in Tunis, Cairo, Madrid, New York, and other cities and towns across the globe - at times in the face of violent repression. They have supported the meaningful exercise of freedom and dignity and helped realize the value of human rights in accordance with article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

33. At the same time, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation referred to limitations to citizen action due to the regulations imposed by the State on the Internet, mobile phones and social media. It argued that “efforts to mobilize citizens are constrained by actions by Governments to restrict Internet freedom by censoring websites, and through the promulgation of laws restricting access to and distribution of specific information”.

## **IV. Enhancing a globally enabling environment for development**

### **A. Strengthening the global partnership for development**

34. The importance of international cooperation is articulated in the Charter of the United Nations. Article 56 of the Charter states that “all Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization” to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The Declaration on the Right to Development reaffirms this call for cooperation between States. Furthermore, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action calls for the international community to “promote an

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<sup>22</sup> For details, see: [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/TheYouthOfYemenInTheArabSpring.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/TheYouthOfYemenInTheArabSpring.aspx).

effective international cooperation for the realization of the right to development and the elimination of obstacles to development”.<sup>23</sup>

35. At the turn of the millennium, the Millennium Declaration became a platform for Governments around the world, the United Nations and development partners, which together committed to making the right to development a reality and to promoting democracy and strengthening the rule of law, as well as respect for internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Of direct relevance for the right to development, the Millennium Development Goal 8 aims to achieve the following objectives: (a) develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system, (b) address the special needs of least developed countries, (c) address the special needs of landlocked developing States, (d) deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries, (e) in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide affordable access to essential drugs in developing countries and (f) in cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.<sup>24</sup>

36. In its contribution, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat affirmed the responsibility of the international community to reduce poverty by promoting “more effective social investment efforts for greater solidarity and equity”. It stated that “such commitments should also be reflected in greater aid and in opening up markets to products from developing countries”.

37. There is no doubt that States have the primary responsibility for promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development. However, according to the Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG 23), “many developing countries are not in a position to fulfil basic economic, social and cultural rights of their citizens; they often lack the financial resources and the technical capacities to effectively meet their obligations with respect to the economic, social and cultural rights of their citizens”. To cope with such obstacles, the Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IIMA) calls for global responsibility stating that “when other countries are not able to achieve this fundamental goal or when the international environment is hostile to this fulfilment, the international community should be called to act as required by the Millennium Development Goal 8, which aims at developing a global partnership for development”.

38. In 2009, world leaders at the World Summit on Food Security, held in Rome from 16 to 18 November 2009, agreed to try to reverse the decline in domestic and international funding for food production and to stimulate new investment in the agricultural sector.<sup>25</sup> Agriculture and the right to food should be a high priority of the international development agenda and States should honour the commitments made at the World Food Summit to promote access to food through increased assistance for agricultural development, and to proactively address the threat of climate change to food production.

39. Global partnership also has a crucial role in the field of health. The human right to health, enshrined in article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an important precondition for the realization of other human rights. In its contribution to this report, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung submitted its publication on an innovative approach to the global health regime. The report proposes a global Health Impact Fund (HIF), which would

<sup>23</sup> Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, Part I, para. 10.

<sup>24</sup> For details, see [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/global.shtml](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/global.shtml).

<sup>25</sup> For details, see [www.fao.org/wsfs/world-summit/en/](http://www.fao.org/wsfs/world-summit/en/).

finance medical research, guarantee researchers reasonable compensation, and keep their discoveries in the public domain thereby improving access to health care.<sup>26</sup>

## B. Financing for Development

40. With regard to the quest for innovative sources of development finance, the *World Economic and Social Survey 2012* provides analysis of current and proposed mechanisms for innovative development finance to complement traditional official development assistance. The *Survey* highlights the potential of innovative development financing, but concludes that realizing this potential will require new types of international agreements and changes in global governance.<sup>27</sup>

41. The Financing for Development (FFD) framework outlines innovative approaches for the creation of a globally enabling environment for development. The conclusions drawn from the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development of 2002, its review conference in Doha in 2008, and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development support global reform of international financial mechanisms and development assistance. NGOs have also advocated reforming the FFD process. In its contribution, the NGO Social Justice in Global Development called for a permanent mechanism tasked with advancing the FFD agenda and suggested replacing the High-level Meetings of the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Dialogues of the General Assembly on FFD with a new focal Committee within the Council designed to ensure concrete outcomes and action-oriented follow-up. Appropriate financing for development requires adequate mechanisms and techniques for delivery of development assistance, including commitment by donor and recipient countries and adequate funds.

42. For example, developing countries should employ national policies to fight hunger and poverty while developed countries should advance these policies through official development assistance (ODA). However, developed countries have not always met their commitments. According to the NGO Committee on FFD, “all countries should accelerate progress towards realizing the 0.7 per cent ODA/GNI target... by establishing binding timetables for increasing ODA to reach the 0.7 per cent target by 2015 at the latest”. Even small increases in development assistance could have significant impacts. According to the International Labour Organization’s calculations, less than 2 per cent of the global gross domestic product (GDP) could provide a basic set of social security benefits to the entire world’s poor and 6 per cent of global GDP could guarantee the rights of all persons to a basic set of benefits, such as water, food, education and health.<sup>28</sup>

43. In its contribution, the NGO Committee on FFD proposed a new financial transaction tax to generate additional funds for development. The Committee argued that a currency-transaction tax would be technically feasible, could be efficiently implemented, and would mobilize more funds than all innovative financing instruments put together so far. In addition, they claimed that the tax would work “to improve progressivity and redistribution in the taxation system ... to reduce systemic risk and the likelihood of future

<sup>26</sup> For more information on the Health Impact Fund, see Thomas Pogge, “Getting the incentives right: The Health Impact Fund. A concrete contribution to global justice and an innovation in global health”, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, July 2011. The article is downloadable at <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/08344.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> *World Economic and Social Survey 2012 In Search of New Development Finance*, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. For full report, see: [www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess\\_current/2012wess\\_overview\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_current/2012wess_overview_en.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> ILO Social Policy Briefings “Can low-income countries afford basic social security?” [www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/secsoc/downloads/policy/policy3e.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/secsoc/downloads/policy/policy3e.pdf).

crises and to align the incentives of the financial sector with those of the real economy". In addition to their tax proposal, the Committee emphasized the responsibility of developing countries to develop fair-taxation systems that promote the equitable redistribution of wealth.

44. A number of special-procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council have collectively advocated the adoption of a global financial-transaction tax to offset the costs of enduring economic, financial, fuel, climate and food crises, and promote the realization of human rights. In a joint statement by the United Nations independent experts on extreme poverty, food, business, foreign debt and international solidarity, they stated that: "Where the world financial crisis has brought about the loss of millions of jobs, socialized private debt burdens and now risks causing significant human rights regressions through wide-ranging austerity packages, a financial transaction tax (FTT) is a pragmatic tool for providing the means for governments to protect and fulfil the human rights of their people".<sup>29</sup>

45. In addition to increasing foreign assistance, States must also improve aid-effectiveness. The Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2011-2020 recommended improving aid quality by, among other measures, increasing ODA for the productive sector. In this regard, the commitment to use country systems as the first option for aid programmes in support of activities managed by the public sector and to provide LDC Governments with timely information in a transparent manner on annual commitments and disbursements were of special concern. In its contribution, the Government of Greece stressed the importance of "demand-driven" development systems rather than the "one-size-fits-all" formulas in aid delivery, so that aid matches "the actual needs of the targeted population." Greece emphasized the importance of aligning ODA with the national development policies of the recipient countries.

46. As indicated by the Monterrey Consensus, foreign debt also poses an important obstacle to FFD.<sup>30</sup> The draft guiding principles on foreign debt and human rights, prepared by the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt, interpreted foreign debt within the human rights framework. The guiding principles stress that debt financing and debt collecting should comply with the human rights obligations of States.<sup>31</sup> According to the Commission on Human Rights, "the exercise of the basic rights of the people of debtor countries to food, housing, clothing, employment, education, health services and a healthy environment cannot be subordinated to the implementation of structural adjustment policies and economic reforms arising from debt"<sup>32</sup>.

47. Another important aspect of FFD is foreign direct investment (FDI). States and businesses should take a human-rights-based approach to FDI. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, FDI should align with environmentally and socially sustainable production systems and national and local priorities.<sup>33</sup> The draft guiding principles on human rights impact assessments of trade and investment agreements<sup>34</sup> and the United Nations "protect,

<sup>29</sup> For details, see: [www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12150&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12150&LangID=E).

<sup>30</sup> For details, see: [www.un.org/esa/ffd/monterrey/MonterreyConsensus.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/monterrey/MonterreyConsensus.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> For information, see: [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/IEDebt/Pages/CallComments.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/IEDebt/Pages/CallComments.aspx).

<sup>32</sup> Commission on Human Rights resolution 2000/82, para. 6.

<sup>33</sup> For more details, see: [www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:62:1445637888397529::NO:62:P62\\_LIST\\_ENTRIE\\_ID:2453910:NO](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:62:1445637888397529::NO:62:P62_LIST_ENTRIE_ID:2453910:NO).

<sup>34</sup> For details, see Draft Guiding Principles on Human Rights Impact Assessments of Trade and Investment Agreements [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/food/docs/20110701Draft\\_Guiding\\_Principles\\_on\\_HRIA.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/food/docs/20110701Draft_Guiding_Principles_on_HRIA.pdf).

respect and remedy” framework each offer additional guidance regarding the human rights considerations that States and businesses should take into account in FDI.<sup>35</sup>

## **V. Conclusions and issues for consideration**

48. **On the basis of the information and analysis contained in the present report, the 2012 Social Forum may wish to consider the following issues related to people-centred development and globalization:**

(a) **The international human rights framework as a foundation for the discussion of people-centred development and globalization;**

(b) **As recommended in the 2011 Social Forum report, the advancement of the right to development and the building of a wider constituency through encouraging broad engagement of civil society and other stakeholders;**

(c) **Alternatives to the prevailing paradigm of economic development and deregulated market-led globalization through strengthened governance, participatory development, democratic governance and the participation of social movements;**

(d) **Problems stemming from narrowly growth-oriented development and globalization and its consequences on the human rights of people, to identify obstacles to people-centred development and globalization and to consider responses to crises based on civil society initiatives and actions at the local, national and global levels;**

(e) **The participation of people of developing countries, women, children, youth, minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants and other vulnerable groups in decision-making processes related to development and globalization;**

(f) **Good practices in people-centred development by Governments, the private sector, civil society, social movements and individuals;**

(g) **The establishment of a dialogue across the United Nations system to promote a common understanding and policy coherence in the global partnership to achieve people-centred and human rights-based development;**

(h) **The role of cooperation, solidarity, international law and shared responsibilities in the creation of a globally enabling environment for development; and**

(i) **Innovative approaches to financing for development from a human rights perspective.**

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<sup>35</sup> For details, see A/HRC/17/31 Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “protect, respect and remedy” Framework.