



25th Session of the Working Group on the Right to Development

National Statement delivered by Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, First Secretary, under Item 4.5 – The contribution of the right to development towards combating discrimination including racial discrimination

(Geneva, 15 May 2024)

Mr. Chair-Rapporteur,

Pakistan aligns with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation thanks the distinguished panelists for their video statements and appreciates the Working Group's consideration of this important convergence between the right to development and combating discrimination.

The principle of non-discrimination is at the heart of international human rights law and runs through our normative framework. It is the fountainhead from which flows the universal, indivisible, interdependent, inter-related and mutually-reinforcing nature of all human rights including the right to development.

Pakistan sees the early operationalization of the right to development as an essential motive force for furthering our collective fight against all forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination.

In this regard, Pakistan fully supports the draft Covenant obliging states parties to fulfil the right to development for all, without discrimination of any kind; as well as its principled approach of development centred on the human person and peoples, and self-determined development by individuals and peoples as rightsholders, to name only two.

Mr. Chair-Rapporteur,

The distinction between the right to development and narrower economic development is made abundantly clear by the draft Covenant.

But economic empowerment and development resources are integral to the full realization of all human rights, including the right to development.

The lived experience of all human rights is directly proportional to available material and political resources.

In this regard, Pakistan wishes to draw attention to two examples – one at the micro level, and the other at a macro level – of systemic barriers in the fight against discrimination and how the right to development could contribute to it.

Firstly, at the micro level, Pakistan’s economy is reliant on remittances from our hardworking expatriates in other countries.

These are a valuable source of foreign exchange for the national exchequer and, more importantly from a human rights perspective, a lifeline for dependents back home – supporting and even enabling the greater enjoyment of human rights for large communities in my country.

Yet these remittances – individually miniscule by any metric – are subject to transaction fees and costs that are determined by financial institutions in a way that is, at best, disproportionate and non-transparent and, at worst, discriminates against those near the bottom of the socioeconomic totem pole, who as we know often already face considerable risk of racial and other forms of discrimination.

Secondly, at the macro level, social and economic models and human rights-based approaches are reliant on data – the more disaggregated the better. Yet there is a lack of data from developing countries owing to capacity and resource constraints.

Algorithmic biases and data-driven discrimination have been mainstreamed in public discourse thanks to surging AI development and the proliferation of LLMs (large language models), but they have always been present in data-driven social sciences and governance.

Models of human behaviour based on data from societies in developed countries cannot be expected to produce comparable outcomes in every country.

How could the right to development make the people the proprietors of their data? How could we – as states – leverage and harness our own data to mainstream and implement the right to development in national governance?

These questions are becoming increasingly important as digital transformation accelerates across our societies and economies.

These are only two examples. Pakistan looks forward to the cumulative wisdom of this working group on how the right to development could further improve states’ ability to combat and counter discrimination in all forms.

We assure you of our continued support and engagement.

I thank you, Mr. Chair-Rapporteur.

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