



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

National Statement delivered by Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, First Secretary, under Item 4.6 – The programme of work of the 26th session

(Geneva, 16 May 2024)

Mr. Chair-Rapporteur,

My delegation appreciates your leadership for steering the proceedings of this IGWG and welcomes your recommendations.

We are also grateful to the Secretariat for having organized a fruitful and constructive 25th meeting of the Working Group despite severe resource constraints.

We are also grateful for the participation of distinguished experts and many member states throughout the agenda.

As the High Commissioner observed in his opening remarks, the right to development remains “a key solution to a world in crisis”.

The proceedings of this Working Group have brought us face to face with – to borrow his words – “systematic injustice, exploitation and repression” and emphasised the crucial role of this right “in building a more peaceful, safer, more just, more generous and more prosperous world.”

Mr. Chair-Rapporteur,

As the Special Rapporteur on the right to development observed yesterday, negotiations on the legally binding instrument cannot preclude efforts to mainstream and operationalise the right to development.

In terms of the international normative framework, the digital frontier remains an area of particular focus.

With new and emerging technologies proliferating rapidly, Pakistan shares the High Commissioner’s concern that “safeguards to protect human rights must be firmly in place at the conception phases of technology and throughout its lifecycle”.

Equally importantly, we appreciate the transformative impact of digital and other emerging technologies on human society and ours shared, unremitting pursuit of realizing all human rights, including the right to development.

Mr. Chair-Rapporteur,

In recent iterations, the Working Group has successfully steered the conversation on the draft Covenant on the Right to Development to the point that discussions could resume in earnest at the General Assembly in New York. This is no mean feat. But it is also no time to rest on our laurels.

You mentioned “new and emerging issues” and how technology has the power to equalize and democratise.

Across civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, technology can be harnessed to bridge divides and unleash positive transformative forces. From women empowerment to countering disinformation to re-imagining work, technological resources will play a major role.

My delegation recognises the value added by this normative conversation and hopes to continue it at every appropriate opportunity.

For the next stage of this Working Group, Pakistan would support the Special Rapporteur’s recommendations to foster greater convergence on the right to development, while emphasizing also this IGWG’s immense potential to contribute to the the Declaration’s implementation in all respects.

I thank you, Mr. Chair-Rapporteur.

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