

UN Declaration on the Right to Development at 25th Anniversary

By Hedwig Johl, GS NGO Representative in Geneva



Did you hear about the right to development? The UN has been speaking about it for 25 years. A legally binding instrument takes a generation to come to pass. Those who work for change need much patience.

Prior to the Open-ended Working Group on the Right to Development this week (13-17 May) I attended an informal Session on 18/19 April open to Member States and Civil Society with a view to improving its effectiveness.

GO TO:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Development/DeclarationRightDevelopment_en.pdf

The following is an overview of the 10 Articles of the Declaration:

- 1...every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social cultural and political development...self-determination...
- 2...the human person is the central subject of development...
- 3...friendly relations and cooperation among States...
- 4...Sustained action to promote more rapid development of developing countries...
- 5...resolute steps to eliminate the massive and flagrant violations of the human rights of peoples and human beings...
- 6...fundamental freedoms for all...
- 7...peace and security...
- 8...equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment...that women have an active role in the development process...eradicating all social injustices...participation...
- 9...Nothing in the present Declaration shall be construed as being contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human rights and International Covenants on Human Rights.
- 10...Steps should be taken to ensure the full exercise and progressive enhancement of the right to development...

In her Opening statement the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group stated their desire to make the Declaration a reality for everyone. There was a heated discussion -one speaker was

against a legally binding instrument (The Czech Republic); another wished indicators (USA), and a third spoke about the eradication of poverty (South Africa). A strong statement for self-determination was made by an NGO Representative in the name of Indigenous Peoples. He said: “We are not civil Society, we are Peoples”.

The NGO Friedrich Ebert Stiftung announced a Side Event with KOEN DE FEYTER, from the Faculty in Antwerp, Belgium, as the main Speaker. He presented his International Policy Analysis: “Towards a Framework Convention on the Right to Development”. He underlined the following key objectives: the environmental dimension, a New International Economic Order and the elaboration of the gender/women’s rights dimension of the right to development.

To download the text:

<http://www.fes-globalization.org/geneva/publications.htm>