

*Check against delivery*



**STATEMENT BY MR. SAAD ALFARARGI,  
SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

High-Level Political Forum

Wednesday, 8 July 2020, 9:00 AM -10:00 AM

**Building back better after COVID-19 and acting where we will have  
the greatest impact on the SDGs:**

**Responding to the economic shock, relaunching growth, sharing economic  
benefits and addressing developing countries' financing challenges**



*Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates, representatives of the United Nations, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am honoured to be with you today in my capacity as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to development.

When establishing my mandate, the Human Rights Council emphasized the urgent need to make the right to development a reality for everyone. There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a serious setback for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is therefore more important than ever to take a hard look at our implementation efforts and come up with a response that will deliver on the promise to leave no one behind.

One of the main reasons implementation of the SDGs continues to lag behind is that policies and programmes fail to identify and address people's real needs. If efforts to achieve the Goals are not based on these needs, they cannot succeed.

Those who have been denied the benefits of past development efforts remain marginalised, disempowered and excluded. Women, racial, religious and ethnic minorities, internally displaced people, migrants, people with disabilities and the poor frequently bear the brunt of this marginalisation. Unless we address the inequalities, exclusion and entrenched discrimination these communities face, durable and inclusive development for all will remain elusive.

The right to development entitles every human being and all peoples to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development. Ensuring meaningful participation means more than just consulting individuals and communities. It implies placing them at the centre of decision-making affecting their own development.

To achieve sustainable results, development must be a holistic process involving everyone who has a stake – from States and international organisations to civil society, academia, the private sector, communities, individuals and

marginalised parts of the population. As States have previously agreed, priorities must be set by the people who development should benefit most: communities must set development agendas, budgets and processes.

It is therefore essential to remove visible and invisible barriers that hinder community participation, such as lack of legal identity, high financial cost or social restrictions, to ensure that the whole of society benefits from development. In other words, States need to **institute and budget for planning processes and monitoring mechanisms that enable everyone to participate**. Governments should consult with civil society on economic planning and reforms, and ensure their participation in monitoring the implementation of development policies and programmes.

Business as usual is not going to deliver results. When reading the introduction to this session I was particularly glad to see recognition that in recent decades, economic growth has been accompanied by increasing or persistently high levels of inequality within countries and a call for fundamental reconfiguration in economic policymaking.

The current crisis gives the opportunity to all relevant actors, involved in development processes, including governments, international financial institutions, donors and private and non-governmental partners, to take a hard look at the ways they identify those left behind, including their efforts to mitigate the damage inflicted by the pandemic. And they have to ensure that their efforts resonate with the real and actual needs of the most marginalised parts of the society.

My thematic reports to the Human Right Council and the UN General Assembly this year are devoted to development finance. I am issuing a number of recommendations to all stakeholders on resource mobilisation, tax policies and ensuring meaningful participation I development finance. I am happy to discuss these with you further.

I thank you for your kind attention.