



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
XX August 2023

English only

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fourth session

11 September–13 October 2023

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Joint written statement\* submitted by Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, Fundación Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social, non- governmental organizations in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2023]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

## **NGOs Written Statement for Item 3: The Interactive Dialogue with the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development (EMRTD) For the Thematic Study on "Inequality and social protection systems in operationalizing the right to development "Right to Development and Obstacles that Generate Inequality"**

We welcome the thematic reports of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development, submitted to the HRC 54 and the discussion on inequalities.

Aligned with the text of the Article 1 of the Convention on the Right to development, we would like to reiterate on the necessity of respecting the principle of non-discrimination at both national and international levels, as a pre-requisite for equal enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights by all people around the world, as right holders.

We remind the international community of the fact that International human rights law prohibits discrimination of any kind. We express deep regret over the discriminatory and politically motivated foreign policies of some States, including imposition of unilateral coercive measures (UCM)s, which are used as foreign policy tools and continue to create systemic discrimination based on nationality against the people living in targeted countries for decades.

We draw the attention of rights holders and duty bearers to the text of Article 1(1) and we emphasize that obstacles to the realization of the right to development are not limited to domestic frameworks. We express serious concerns over certain foreign policy tools including the unilateral coercive measures (UCM)s, which are imposed on countries beyond the authority of the United Nations and the international rule of law to impact international environment in such a way the realization of the right to development becomes tough, if not impossible for many developing States.

The impact of UCMs on exacerbating national inequalities through increase of poverty and unemployment is equally alarming. The people of sanctioned and developing countries experience serious inequalities in terms of income, access to social services and enjoyment of all human rights as a result of sanctions. Unilateral economic sanctions that target the economy of developing countries (1), widen the wealth distribution gaps in these countries and push more and more people below the poverty line to create increasing social dissatisfaction

As NGOs based in sanctioned developing countries, we strongly believe that UCMs hamper successful implementation of many national programs that aim at provision of equal rights for various sectors of society and try to reach out to marginalized groups.

However, we welcome the idea of initiating universal social protection programs that support populations in response to emergencies such as pandemics and to provide populations with equal access to social services, including access to quality health care, in line with SDG Goal 3.

At the same time, we are alarmed by the bitter reality that the existing regime of unilateral multilayered sanctions that are imposed on many countries, block their access to any international protection mechanism, while undermining the national protection programs. The multiple sanctions, which are imposed on countries beyond the authority of the UN, block the channels of any cooperation and coordination between the sanctioned countries and the rest of the world.

We draw the attention of the international community and the EXMRTD to the fact that under sanctions, any attempt focused at reduction or eradication of inequality and poverty is REVERSED by poverty-generator UCMs. All the obstacles created by UCMs prevent economic growth and provision of funding necessary for addressing the root causes of

poverty and inequality in addition to reducing all the funds necessary for improvement of the right to development and attainment of sustainable development goals.

Recommendations:

We urge the EMRTD to support the Article 14 of the "Revised draft convention on the right to development" (A/HRC/WG.2/23/2), while making comments on the document, because some States are trying to remove the Article 14, while it can contribute to the lives of millions of people who live in countries targeted by sanctions.

We request the EXMRTD to discuss the role of UCMs as an important factor contributing to domestic and international inequalities and to offer recommendations to the developing and sanctioned countries on how to address and mitigate the challenge.

Finally, we call on the EXMRTD to discuss the role of UCMs as a serious obstacle on the pathway of moving toward achievement of development for the sanctioned developing countries and offer recommendations to the Human Rights Council on how to approach this form of unilateralism that undermine the authority of the UN and the international rule of law.

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The International People's Tribunal on U.S. Imperialism: Sanctions, Blockades, and Economic Coercive Measures, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

1. For example, "The effect of sanctions on Iranian economy based on Congressional Research Service report in May 2014 is including: decline in oil export about 60% from 2.5 mbd in 2011 to 1 mbd in 2013 that this leads to reduce in Iran's oil sale revenue from \$100 billion to \$35 billion": Pourshahabi, Farshid & Dahmardeh, Nazar. (2014). The Effects of Economic Sanctions and Speculative Attacks on Inflation. *Iran Economy Review*, 18(3), 45-67, available at: [https://ier.ut.ac.ir/article\\_54803\\_52f0e82206f948020162bd235c4d9fcf.pdf](https://ier.ut.ac.ir/article_54803_52f0e82206f948020162bd235c4d9fcf.pdf)