

World's poor bearing the brunt of global crises, stresses UN rights expert

14 September 2017 – Impacts of climate change and the global economic crisis are compounding the threats faced by people living in poverty around the world, a United Nations rights expert warned, calling on the international development community to put human rights at the centre of their work.

“People in developing countries are [paying a heavy price for global actions beyond their control](#),” said Saad Alfarargi, the UN [Special Rapporteur on the right to development](#), delivering his maiden report to the [Human Rights Council](#) – the highest intergovernmental forum in the UN system on rights issues.

“We are witnessing some of the greatest challenges the world has ever seen, without the global commitment to deliver change,” he added.

In a [news release](#) issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)), the UN expert stressed that even more than 30 years after the adoption of the [Declaration on the Right to Development](#), many around the planet are still unaware of the existence of right to development, and it remains far from being universally recognized and even further from full implementation.

Mr. Alfarargi also noted increasing politicization of issues related to the right to development that has resulted in little promotion, protection and fulfillment of the right.

Adding to this, the multitude of challenges – ranging from new global pandemics, corruption, privatization of public services to austerity – on top of global financial and economic crisis, energy and climate crisis and an increasing number of natural disasters are further complicating the situation.

The worst impact is felt among the world's poor and those living in Africa, in the world's least developed countries, and in developing countries that either landlocked or small islands.

A means to remedy the plight, noted the Special Rapporteur is raising the low level of awareness, from grassroots organizations to governments, and to make sure they are all fully engaged in implementing the right.

The building blocks for change are already available, he highlighted.

Any group working for development should put the right to development at the centre of their work

Global agreements are in place to deliver global solutions, he said, noting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change, the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) on financing for development and the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#).

All UN agencies, development agencies, financial and trade institutions in short any group working for development should put the right to development at the centre of their work, he stressed.

There is an urgent need to make the right to development a reality for everyone.

Mr. Alfarargi is the first UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development. He was [appointed](#) by the Geneva-based [UN Human Rights Council](#) at its 34th session in February-March 2017.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.