



**South Centre Statement to the 2nd Session of the Expert Mechanism on the
Right to Development**

11-12 November 2020

Third Thematic Study on inequalities and the right to development

Distinguished experts and participants,

The South Centre is pleased to be given the opportunity to intervene at the second session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development (RtD).

Last June, at the first session of this new Expert Mechanism, the first members of this mechanism were appointed and the proposed thematic studies were adopted. Congratulations for operationalization of this mechanism.

Since 1966, the Right to Development has gone through the stages from being a new concept, to being well acknowledged and then being included in the United Nations (UN) resolutions and outcomes of other international conferences and platforms. However, concrete analysis and identification of practical solutions for implementation are still far from sufficient. There is huge distance from “making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want” as committed by heads of State and Government in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Right now, the COVID-19 pandemic carries the real risk of making the realization of this commitment even more remote.

The first session of the Expert Mechanism on June 2020 was held at a time when the COVID situation was improving after the first lockdown and there was the talk of returning to normalcy and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) revised up its economic projection for 2021 in September. Unfortunately, things turned for the worse and we are now in the depth of the second wave of the pandemic which is worse than the first one. The synchronized economic recession is spiraling down deeper. The economic, social and human rights costs of the pandemic have been huge. Even the health systems of many developed countries are now on the verge of breakdown.



The COVID-19 pandemic has made our work on RtD even more indispensable and challenges more acute as income, gender, health care and other inequalities including digital divide have further widened. Crisis time is always a time for widening inequalities and pushing more people to poverty and hunger. How to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic and make the future recovery more inclusive and fairer have become burning issues for RtD. We hope the thematic studies of the Expert Mechanism would adapt to the changing situation. To cover the huge gap of financing in developing countries, increasing inequalities, unemployment, digital gap, the problem of access to vaccines and other COVID-19 related therapies, and other urgent issues could be important aspects of the thematic studies, on which the South Centre has also been involved in various processes.