



Statement to the 10th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

28 October 2024

The South Centre, as an intergovernmental organization and think tank of developing countries, has promoted the efforts of its Member States from all regions of the Global South for the effective realization of the Right to Development.

We would like to express our support to the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development, emphasizing that international cooperation and solidarity are essential pillars for the full realization of the Right to Development in developing and least developed countries. The complementarity shown between the work of the Expert Mechanism, the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development and the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development is commendable and should be further strengthened to drive impactful multilateral outcomes.

The thematic discussions during this session of the Expert Mechanism are timely and relevant, as they consider the relationship of the Right to Development with issues of high concern to developing countries, such as the role of business enterprises, meaningful civil society participation, artificial intelligence, trade, biodiversity and international development cooperation.

We note with concern that there has been a scaling back of Official Development Assistance (ODA) by donor countries, with aid budgets instead being used for in-country costs, such as for hosting refugees. In 2023, in-donor refugee costs accounted for 14% of total ODA, and its share was more than a quarter of ODA in seven donor countries. Furthermore, last year only 5 advanced economies met the internationally accepted target, most recently reiterated in the Pact for the Future, of allocating 0.7% of their GNI to ODA. A number of donor countries have announced further cuts to their aid budgets in the coming years. For example, it is expected that least-developed countries will see an average annual reduction in ODA from the European Union of around 35% for 2025-2027 when compared to the amounts allocated for 2021-2024.

This worrying trend has many implications for the financing required to fully realize the Right to Development in Global South countries. Strong efforts are needed at the multilateral level and within donor countries to ensure that ODA actually benefits developing and least developed countries, and that a greater share of ODA is provided in the form of grants rather than loans. In this context, we welcome the upcoming thematic study on the Right to Development in international development cooperation.

The South Centre stands ready to support the Expert Mechanism with our policy based research and analysis from the perspective of the global South towards ensuring the full and effective realization of the human right to development.

Thank you.