

South Centre General Statement:

12th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development (EMRTD)

27 October 2025, Geneva

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The South Centre commends the Expert Mechanism for convening this timely session and for its vital work in advancing the Right to Development (RtD).

The programme of work you have established addresses some of the core challenges faced by developing countries. The thematic discussions on climate finance, trade tariffs, and the implications of new technologies such as AI are interconnected issues with potential benefits and impacts on the right to development.

At the same time, they also provide strong examples of systemic fragmentation, in which international economic rules often conflict with a State's human rights obligations.

Mr. Chair, the Right to Development is the normative bridge required to overcome this fragmentation. It provides the essential legal and ethical framework to integrate economic governance with the principles of equity, participation, social justice, and international cooperation.

As we near the 40th anniversary of the Declaration, a topic for discussion in this very session, this remains a crucial task. The commemoration must serve as a political catalyst to the ongoing process to finalise the draft covenant on the Right to Development.

The draft Covenant is the essential mechanism to transform the Declaration's powerful principles into binding, effective, and enforceable legal commitments.

We look forward to the rich and focused discussions this week.

Thank you.