

Human Rights Council – 42nd session

Item 8: General Debate

23 September 2019

Joint Statement on the equality and interdependence of all human rights

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia and a group of 47 countries – a full list will be uploaded to the HRC extranet.

The recognition of the inherent dignity, and equal and inalienable rights, of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

We are concerned that some states seek to promote some human rights over others.

Every individual is entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights; as states, we cannot pick-and-choose between our obligations to protect, respect and fulfil human rights. For indeed, in the words of Martin Luther King, ‘a right delayed is a right denied’.

We reaffirm that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action makes clear that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and that the international community needs to support the strengthening and promotion of democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire world. It also makes clear that while development facilitates the enjoyment of all human rights, the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights.

In the words of former UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, ‘there can be no peace without development, no development without peace, and no lasting peace or sustainable development without respect for human rights and the rule of law.’

We call on all UN members to give effect to our responsibilities in this regard.

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