

7th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT



DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABILITY, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

6, 7 and 8 November 2024
Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa

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In his speech at the SDG Summit held in New York in September 2023, the UN Secretary General emphasised the critical role of human rights in achieving the SDGs. According to him the SDGs “carry the hopes, dreams, rights and expectations of people everywhere”.¹ The Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015 provides States with “an ideal platform to demonstrate their commitment to all human rights”² and encompassed the three pillars of sustainability, namely, the economic, social and environmental.

In the case of Africa, its economy has recorded considerable growth for the past several years. Yet, this has failed to bring about socio-economic change and transformation as one would have expected. The Continent remains underdeveloped characterised by rampant poverty, corruption, lack of basic services, poor education, lack of housing, healthcare and infrastructure. Political instability, constitutional and military coups have contributed to turn the rule of law into a tool of socio-political and economic suppression of the masses. The issue of (sustainable) development is real as the fair distribution of resources and the benefits of development and improvement of the living conditions of individual citizens remains the top priority. With one-third of its population undernourished and millions with no access to clean water, electricity, education, healthcare and infrastructure, Africa currently sits at the bottom of most major development indices. It is suggested that the full enjoyment of all human

rights will only be possible in the context of worldwide progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, including the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions globally and especially in countries across the Global South where these problems are in dire need of solutions.

This merges with the right to development that stands at the intersection of critical global concerns including sustainability, human rights, and law. It therefore becomes increasingly imperative to explore how development processes can be steered towards sustainability while upholding human rights and adhering to the rule of law. It is vital to harness the synergies between the right to development, other human rights, sustainable development and the rule of law in a bid to address the core issue.



¹ UN Secretary General at the SDG Summit | Sustainable Development | United Nations. Available at <https://youtu.be/mUWov3Zy1bQ>.

² Universal Rights Group. Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals – Pursuing Synergies. Available at <https://www.universal-rights.org/urg-policy-reports/human-rights-sustainable-development-goals-pursuing-synergies-2/>.

Following this background, the Free State Centre for Human Rights, University of the Free State in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, South Africa, the University of Dayton Human Rights Center, USA, Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, Portugal, the Department of Law and Political Science, University of Siena, Italy and the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner present the seventh International Conference on the Right to Development under the theme Development, Sustainability, Law and Human Rights. This Conference scheduled to take place at Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa in Portugal from 6 to 8 November 2024 aims to delve into these pressing issues and achieve the following key objectives:

- Foster interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration on the right to development and its implications for development, sustainability, law, and all human rights.
- Explore innovative approaches to the right to development that prioritise sustainability, fair redistributions of resources and of the benefits of development, and compliance with the rule of law.
- Examine the place of law in promoting and realising the right to development at the local, national, regional, and international levels.
- Identify challenges, opportunities, lessons learned and best practices in advancing the right to development agenda in diverse contexts.

The conference will bring together academics and researchers, legal professionals and practitioners, policymakers and government officials, activists and representatives from civil society organisations and NGOs, community leaders, students and young professionals interested in (sustainable) development issues from critical, interdisciplinary, and contextually engaged perspectives. We welcome contributions that focus on the following sub-themes or any related topics:

- Right to Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Human Rights, Law and Sustainable Development;
- Economic Development, Social and Global Justice;
- Right to Development, All Human Rights and the Rule of Law;
- Right to Development and Inclusive, Just and Equitable Development;
- Access to Justice and Rule of Law in Development Processes;
- Right to Development, Self-Determination and Sovereignty over Natural Resources;
- The Sustainable Development goals, Human Rights and the Rule of Law



FORMAT STRUCTURE

The three-day conference will follow a hybrid format and is scheduled to take place from Wednesday 06 November to Friday 08 November 2024 with opportunities for individual and/or group presentations organised in panels.

The conference will feature keynote speeches by renowned experts, panel discussions on thematic areas, and networking sessions.

Participants will have the opportunity to engage in dynamic exchanges, share their research and experiences, and forge collaborations, partnerships and networks for future actions. Submissions that demonstrate originality and relevance will be considered for an edited volume or special issue to be published in an accredited and peer reviewed journal.



TIMELINE

Individual/Group Presentations: Submit a short abstract of no more than 300 words and a short CV/ bio (150 words) to Gerard Kamga at kamdengkamgaga@ufs.ac.za on or before 31 August 2024.

Notification of Accepted Abstracts and Panels for the Conference: 06 September 2024.

Conference in Hybrid Format (online and on-site): 06, 07 and 08 November 2024.

Submission of Full Selected Papers for Double Blind Peer-Review: 23 December 2024.