

RETHINKING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The “safe, stable, and just society” needed for social integration is both the sine qua non and the result of human interaction that is consistently cognizant of human rights. Rethinking social development in a context of deep regard for human rights prompts a move beyond social integration to a mindset of social inclusion. Social inclusion is the route by which terms are improved for individuals and groups to take part in society. For social integration/inclusion to flourish it must be nourished within the explicit framework of human rights language. A flourishing process of social inclusion creates a safe environment for diverse communities to interact with each other. Social inclusion ensures that all people of all ages—including girls, women and indigenous people—and organizations have the right to have a voice in decisions which affect their lives, without any fears of harassment, intimidation, stigmatization, reprisals, criminalization, or any type of violence. All sections of society must have the right to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and information, peaceful assembly, association and public participation.

Addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality requires that we address the systemic issues of islands of extreme wealth in the ocean of abject poverty. Financial systems will need to be reformed for social integration and social inclusion to flourish. This will require political will that thus far has not been in evidence.

A decent work agenda demands less emphasis on freeing up business to grow and create jobs and greater stress on dealing with poor practices by employers. Profit is an acceptable human desire but it must not be achieved at the expense of the vulnerable.

To promote social inclusion and integration we recommend the following:

- Ensure universal social protection floors in keeping with ILO recommendation 202.
- Respect and protect the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination and maintenance and development of their cultures.
- Revisit and affirm Commitments on social integration articulated in the Copenhagen Declaration and weave its national and international elements into the SDG targets.
- Promote policies that eliminate the resource allocation disparity that cause extreme poverty.
- Respect the rights of local communities to control use of their natural resources and eliminate practices and laws that enable land-grabs leading to displacement of indigenous people.
- Reform international financial systems to free nations to develop their resources in ways that benefit their people.
- Foster the central role of the family in which women and men of all ages enjoy equality of rights and shared responsibilities and the rights of girls and boys to thrive.
- Provide a framework for reform of national policies to protect human rights and honor the contributions of migrant workers in the development of host countries.

Reducing inequalities and promoting social integration not only benefits those who historically have been left behind, but also is essential for establishing and maintaining a peaceful society in which the social, economic and environment pillars of development can support a sustainable future.