

# CLAIMS AND PROPOSALS

FOR BREAKING WITH  
MALDEVELOPMENT



A first draft for a roadmap by  
and for social movements

**Claims and proposals for breaking with maldevelopment,  
a first draft for a roadmap by and for social movements.**

Offprint from the book "Une pandémie révélatrice  
d'unmaldevelopment généralisé" by Murad Akincilar,  
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# INTRODUCTION

Gathered during the first worldwide confinements linked to Covid-19, many of the claims in this booklet focus on health and development issues.




This set of claims and objectives is not intended to be exhaustive. It is therefore necessary to add to and complete this list step by step, to ensure that these demands are followed up and systematically updated, and to take into account the constantly evolving actions and demands of other social movements.

These demands and proposals focus mainly on the issues of health and maldevelopment, but it will be worthwhile at a later stage to address other issues aimed at changing the system from a grassroots perspective, based on social justice and the regeneration of eco-systems.

At this stage, these demands and objectives do not constitute a program of action for the radical transformation of maldevelopment. They do not yet represent a complete political project in the face of an oligarchy that is politically and militarily hyper-organised.

They are disparate, but still reflect a quest, disordered on a global scale, to find a way out of the multidimensional health, climate and social crisis that is underway. This booklet therefore has no pretension other than to summarise and bring together the objectives formulated by social movements during the health crisis. It is only a first attempt, a sketch of a roadmap to ensure that the way out of the crisis is in favour of the oppressed and excluded populations rather than to their detriment.

Achieving these demands and measures will not radically alter the relationships of domination and structural inequalities on a global scale. However, it would hopefully have the potential to provide avenues for autonomous social movements, helping them to change the balance of power against the neoliberal oligarchy.



The realization of these demands does not require neither the endorsement of political powers, nor the approval of neoliberal cartels in each country.

These measures can be conceded by the authorities, following a balance of power, or wrested by social movements and citizens' organisations by their own means. Their implementation, in whole or in part, could represent an alternative to the actions of neoliberal financial and commercial globalisation and reverse the effects of maldevelopment. It could at once alleviate a health emergency, opening up solutions in a series of measures in favour of the right to health for all; respond to a social emergency, appropriating the tools needed for a policy of wealth-sharing, redistribution and the fight against inequality; enable progress towards environmental justice and the decommodification of nature.

Independent, concerted and savvy in the face of neoliberal political maneuvering, social movements could thus open the way towards another mode of development that is truly more social and ecological; lay the foundations for peaceful, emancipatory human relationships in harmony with nature; fundamentally experiment with other ways of producing and consuming, and therefore, taking steps towards breaking with maldevelopment.



To put together this list of demands and proposals, Murad Akincilar visited social movements around the world. He thus collected their testimonies during the first confinements linked to Covid-19. This is why the demands presented mainly relate to health and developmental issues.

This booklet is taken from his book *Une pandémie révélatrice d'un maldéveloppement généralisé*, published by CETIM, in Geneva, 2023.

# I. GENERAL CLAIMS & PROPOSALS



1

Take measures against unfair trade and for the equitable distribution of wealth as well as against the grip of the private sector on natural resources and unbridled waste.

2 Relocate food production, health services and all production of essential goods and services.



3 Active promotion by international organisations of **One Health** approaches and ambitious international biodiversity targets, such as the extension and improvement of networks of protected zones. To this end, they must develop innovative financing for biodiversity conservation as well as ecologically and socially sustainable agriculture.



The destruction of oceanic and terrestrial ecosystems must be halted immediately.

To achieve this, criminalising the contamination of water and air sources as well as the deforestation of ancestral lands is an indispensable solution.

In addition, the crime of ecocide must be recognised as such in international law.

## KEYWORD: ONE HEALTH

An approach involving collaboration between public health, animal health, plant health and environmental professionals to “effectively detect, treat and prevent zoonotic disease outbreaks and food safety problems”.

See the World Health Organisation website: <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/one-health>

4 Full respect for the right to water and a ban on the commodification of this vital resource. Subsidies must be provided for water collection and equitable distribution facilities.



**5** Breaking with the precepts of the “Washington Consensus”, which promotes the myth that economic growth will lead to prosperity and greater respect for human rights, and the logic of the so-called structural adjustment programmes imposed by the international financial institutions.

**6** Set up commissions to confront the past and ensure restorative justice in relation to the structural adjustment programmes imposed without the consent of the people and which are undermining health systems.



**7** Rebuild the IMF, the WTO and the World Bank, which give priority to private interests, or to replace them with other institutions so that they serve citizens and peoples.

**8** Withdraw from the WTO negotiations on agriculture, because beyond the choice of production and development in this area, putting industrialists in competition with the family peasantry amounts to condemning the latter to famine. There cannot be “free trade” between the poor and the rich, the dominant and the dominated, the powerful and the weak, the two being by definition unequal, having neither the same means nor the same capabilities.

**9** Abolition of WTO rules on intellectual property rights for vaccines, essential medicines and medical supplies.



**10** Priority and active promotion of anti-poverty programmes in environmentally, health - and climate - vulnerable communities.



**12** Take measures against capital flight and tax evasion. Governments must stop serving private interests by undercutting the tax system.

**11** Establishment of capital controls and immediate implementation of regulation of the financial sector so that it is put at the service of people and citizens.

This regulation should make it possible to systematically prosecute managers responsible for financial offenses and crimes.



**TAX**

**13** Elimination of all tax havens whose very existence constitutes a form of legalized theft by allowing financial entities, businesses, political leaders, etc. to hide “their” money and thus evade state taxes, laws and regulations.



**14** Cancellation of illegitimate, odious, illegal and unsustainable **external debt**, following the realization of citizen and public debt audits.



**15** Recognition and payment of the colonial ecological debt of the countries of the North to the countries of the South.

**16** Actively fighting corruption, whether active or passive, in all its forms, in both the private and public sectors, in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.



#### DEBT

Debt suffocates the economies of the countries concerned, forcing them to devote almost all their resources to servicing it.

Numerous independent studies show that debt has already been repaid several times over and that maintaining it is a political choice. It is a political lever used to enslave the peoples of the South.

**17** Legal supervision/inspection of the activities of transnational corporations, at national and international level, to ensure that they do not impede the exercise of the right to development and self-determination of peoples and do not violate their human rights.



**18** Safeguard effective international cooperation. This must give priority to the general interest and preserve public services. This cooperation goes well beyond official development assistance (the famous 0.7% of GDP). It implies the cooperation of all in the development objectives that each nation sets itself to satisfy the basic needs of its population.





**19** Implement the **Durban Declaration** to ensure global peace and security, respect for human dignity and the realisation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

### DURBAN DECLARATION

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban in 2001, condemned colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It describes apartheid, genocide, slavery and the slave trade as “crimes against humanity” (§ 15).

Among other things, it calls on “the international community and its members to honour the memory of the victims of these tragedies”, while guaranteeing “access to justice, to effective and appropriate protection and remedies, and to legal assistance when necessary, including the right to seek and obtain adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered” (§§ 98 to 106).

**22** To put an end to and immediately prohibit unilateral coercive measures that violate not only the right to self-determination of peoples, but also all human rights and the right to development.

**24** To ensure the participation of citizens' organisations in the development of measures to prevent health and food crises and to promote climate and social justice.



**20**

Put an end to imperialist and neo-colonial wars and interference, which destroy and disarticulate entire societies and the environment.



**21**

Take active measures to maintain peace, to promote general disarmament, and prevent and prohibit war, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. To use the resources thereby recovered to strengthen public services.



**23**

Integration into GDP of more rates and indices linked to human development calculated by independent bodies.

**25**

Ban all forms of violence and discrimination based on gender, social class, “race” or age.

**26** Raising awareness on ecosystems and the social determinants of health in school curricula from primary school onwards and throughout compulsory education.

Public schools have an essential role to play in raising the awareness of new generations about issues such as climate justice, inequality, biodiversity and food sovereignty.



**28** Creation of citizens' assemblies and councils in the workplace as forums for public debate and political participation.



**27** Promoting the right of peoples to decide their own future and choose their own development model (right to development), economic, social and cultural rights and human rights more generally, from a grassroots perspective.

Take measures to prevent violations of these rights and to ensure popular participation in decision-making processes.



**30** Promoting the right of local populations to information on health and climate emergencies, their causes, their likely long-term consequences and possible solutions.

**32** Compliance of economic and development policies with the commitments of the Paris Agreement, the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and the entire body of human rights law, in particular that relating to economic, social and cultural rights.

**29** Promotion by public institutions of the exercise of direct democracy, at local, regional and national levels, to enable the population to participate fully in the reconstruction of a post-crisis, post-fossil fuel economy.



**31** Systematic integration of imperatives relating to health, food, education, the environment, sustainable and egalitarian development, animal welfare, etc., into the process of defining public action plans.



# 33

Promotion of the right of social movements to defend themselves against the arbitrary actions of the authorities; to oppose by various methods and means any policy or action undertaken by a powerful minority as a means of combating climate injustice or other policies that are detrimental to human rights, as well as those that exacerbate inequalities and cause impoverishment, hunger, dispossession and economic, social and political exclusion; to be financially, politically and ideologically independent of transnational corporations, financial institutions, philanthropic foundations and governments.



# 34

Recognition of the “Right to Say No”, a concept based on free, prior and informed consent, as an essential step towards the right to a self-determined development. It is the fundamental right of communities not only to be involved and informed about plans to exploit natural resources, but also, in the event of unsatisfactory results from the negotiation processes, to say 'no' to the projects.



# 35

Combat targeted killings, gender-based violence, threats, harassment and criminalisation of human rights and environmental defenders.



Give priority to protecting those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and who are most at risk of attacks and restrictions based on their economic precariousness, gender and sexual orientation, race and other forms of discrimination, such as women employees, workers, human rights activists, defenders of the rights of indigenous and colonised peoples and activists from marginalised communities.

# 36

Setting up independent investigations into the summary executions of activists fighting for justice and a different development model.



# 37

Take emergency measures to resolve the water supply crisis in each region and guarantee access.

# 38

Ensure full transparency of information and data on the evolution of pandemics and on government measures in each country (disaggregated by sex, age, income, sexual orientation, gender identity and location/territory, as far as possible).



39

Ensure that marginalised communities – including those without access to official documents, in particular transgender people and poor and working-class migrants – receive support services; ensure the rapid provision of emergency relief such as universal basic income and food distribution.



## II. SPECIFIC CLAIMS & PROPOSALS

### A. On public health

1 Development of accessibility and equity solutions at all levels of the healthcare and public health systems. Universal free primary healthcare is essential.



2 Support for the development of health services for all.

This involves funding the pillars of universal social protection, including unemployment insurance, childcare, maternity protection and pensions.



3 Implementation of the Alma Ata Declaration in relation to current emergencies.

4 Strengthening the role, funding and autonomy of the WHO and strictly limiting the interference of donor countries, pharmaceutical lobbies and “philanthropic” foundations.



5 In the interests of public health, suspension and/or abolition of intellectual property rules and development of a procedure to create universal vaccines and medicines for all.

6 Allocation of sufficient public funds for public research into viruses.



7 Establishment of adequate procedures to protect the prison population. Health measures must not be an instrument of double penalisation and reinforced isolation.



**8** Reactivating vaccination campaigns against other diseases such as measles, diphtheria and polio.



**9** Setting up pharmaceutical production in low-income countries and in the public sector.

**10** Permission for the ICRC, or any other recognised humanitarian organisation, to vaccinate members of armed opposition groups, regardless of their political affiliation, in order to combat pandemics.



**11** Increase investment in the prevention, monitoring and risk-mapping of zoonoses. Local and federal governments must release exceptional budgets, commensurate with the crisis.



**12** Freeze the prices of essential cleaning products, hygiene products and healthy foodstuffs, according to the cultural specificities of each country.

**13** Demand sensitive health interventions to protect the health of all, paying particular attention to marginalised people, the poor, transsexuals, migrants, people of colour, the elderly and people with disabilities.

These services include mental health services, HIV/AIDS drugs, cancer treatment, etc.



**14** Put in place a higher investment budget to address climate injustice and socially restructure public health.

**15** Eliminate barriers to access to healthcare for populations without legal status, minorities, immigrants and nomads.

**16** Increased protection for minorities and indigenous communities, in particular indigenous women who do not have access to maternal health care.

**17** Unrestricted access to food. Nutrition and access to food are fundamental human rights and should not depend on social status or identity card.



## B. Demands of workers in the health sector

**1** It is in everyone's interest to develop support programmes that include urgent investment in public health and measures to support all workers, regardless of their status, including those in the informal sector. The trade union organisations have defined some key measures:



- a) Paid sick leave from day one;
- b) Wage and income protection;
- c) Reduction in weekly working hours, if necessary with government assistance to maximise income security;
- d) Vouchers for the most vulnerable groups;
- e) Mortgage and rent relief;
- f) Universal social protection and free access to health care;
- g) Childcare support for frontline workers in the health sector, supermarkets, pharmacies and other vital areas.

**2** Recognition of Covid-19, and any other viral disease in the context of pandemics, as an occupational disease for employees in front-line branches during the pandemic.

**3** Ensure the protection of workers by providing them with high-quality personal protective equipment and masks, as well as any other necessary equipment.

Front-line workers must, of course, be adequately trained and protected to deal with the disease.

**4** Elimination of trade secrets in the pharmaceutical sector and publication of information on production costs and public investment used, in a clear and accessible manner to the general public.



**5** Provision of appropriate identification cards to front-line health workers so that they can carry out essential health care without incurring fines, violence or other sanctions imposed by the State during isolation, curfew and quarantine measures.



**6** Significantly increase screening tests for healthcare workers.



**7** Ensure that hospitals and other medical centres are adequately equipped, including ventilators and intensive care unit beds, in accordance with emergency risks.

**8** Impose a moratorium on the closure of hospital beds, departments and sites. Better distribution of the budget allocated to the health sector between rural and urban services.

**9** Recognition of the right of workers to stop working if they decide that there is an imminent risk to their health or life (based on Conventions 155 and 187 of the International Labour Organisation).



**11** Increase the salaries of health workers and ensure that they are adequately and regularly paid. An end must be put to the logic of flow and fee-for-service pricing.



**10** Ensure the immediate disbursement of funds to establish pandemic training and refresher schools for health workers, including doctors, nurses and public health workers.



**13** Guaranteed inclusion of elected staff representatives or health worker unions in bodies that formulate policies for the health sector, whether in general, for the Covid-19 crisis or for any other health crisis in the future. They must have a voice in helping to determine such policies.

**12** Guaranteed health and life insurance schemes that are better adapted to healthcare workers, who are more likely to fall ill or die of illness.

**14** Immediate channelling of substantial funds identified by professional organisations and independent experts to the expansion of public health programmes, including primary health care, and the lifting of austerity policies.



**15** Mobilise health workers to help the community, support women workers in the informal economy and ensure that they are properly paid and provided with protective equipment.



# III. CROSS-CUTTING CLAIMS & PROPOSALS

## A. Peasant farming, environmental protection and climate justice



- 1 Gradual reduction then cessation of credits, subsidies and aid granted to polluting transport industries. Introduction of a tax on stock market transactions and dividends, with higher taxes on the most polluting sectors.



- 2 Encourage the creation of alternative economies that are ecologically sound and sustainable, but also create more pedestrianised districts and streets in order to combat environmental racism, the gentrification of districts with cultural value and the ghettoisation of districts with a dense and disadvantaged population.

- 3 Promotion of local, healthy and sustainable ecological farming food systems, with decent working conditions protecting workers and communities affected by the transition; promotion of a low-carbon economy and reduced social inequalities. In particular, support should be directed towards sustainable peasant and ecological farming, traditional grazing practices, small-scale artisanal fishing, etc.



- 4 Strengthen the perspective of **food sovereignty** and ecological agriculture that favours proximity and the preservation of ecosystems and aims to abandon pesticides that are harmful to the environment.



### FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.

Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations.

*Based on the Nyéléni Declaration, adopted in 2007 by La Via Campesina,*



**5** Drawing up a programme to convert from agro-industry and intensive livestock farming to a food system based on limited, local and ecological livestock farming. To this end, it is essential to recover ancestral knowledge of land stewardship, the protection of endemic seeds and food production.



**6** Participation of rural organisations, non-governmental organisations and social movements in decisions concerning the sustainable use of land and marine resources.



**7** Reducing the vulnerability of local rural communities to natural disasters, extending and improving networks of protected areas to cope with extractivist activities.

**8** Setting up a higher investment budget to remedy climate injustice and socially restructure public health.

**9** Strong legislation to end government complicity in global deforestation.

**10** Creation of a fund to fight forest fires, droughts, floods, hurricanes and species losses.



**11** A ban on the export of toxic waste to countries of the South.

**12** An energy transition must be driven towards clean, safe, renewable and equitably distributed energy sources. To this end, financial institutions must stop supporting the extraction of fossil fuels, and instead finance projects aimed at conserving biodiversity and promoting ecological agriculture. In addition, funds must be created and democratically managed, through progressive taxation of the incomes of the directors of transnational corporations – and more generally on wealth – on capital, on corporate profits, on financial transactions and on inheritance from a threshold defined according to the distribution of wealth in each country.



**13** Ensure the independence of scientific organisations, research centres and institutes vis-a-vis economic interest groups. The latter must carry out research and make proposals aimed at increasing resource efficiency and strengthening the resilience of cities, communities and ecosystems for the benefit of the working classes.



**14** Protection of water and energy resources that gives priority to local communities. These resources are becoming increasingly scarce as a result of increased evaporation, not to mention reduced snow accumulation in mountainous regions. A development plan should therefore take this into account. Drinking water must be distributed to refugee camps and poor neighbourhoods.



**15** Create an Environmental Tribunal with jurisdiction to judge and punish States and industries whose actions or omissions cause climate change and eco-system deterioration.



## B. Working conditions and the fight against inequalities

**2** Companies must adopt the principles of the circular economy, co-managed by local communities, to reduce resource use and waste and commit to maintaining transparent, deforestation-free supply chains.



**1** A reduction in working hours (with no loss of pay) to offer jobs to everyone.

**3** Budgets must be prioritised for women, local and indigenous communities, youth and workers. All subsidies must be allocated according to the principle of “public money for public goods”.



**4** Enhance and extend collective labour agreements that improve workers' living conditions. Progressive abolition of precarious and flexible forms of employment imposed without the consent of employees, with fixed terms chained or indexed to unilaterally imposed performance criteria, and which do not respect all the provisions of social and economic rights, in accordance with UN and ILO standards.



**5** To respect the territorial rights and self-determination of peoples and communities, as well as their sovereignty over their natural resources and genetic wealth, both underground and above ground.

**6** Guarantee secure border access for migrants and refugees and close migrant detention centres. Abolish all discrimination against them in terms of political, economic and social rights. Equal rights, including free access to healthcare, public education and decent housing, must be guaranteed.



# C. Liability of transnational corporations

**1** In the aftermath of the pandemic, legal proceedings must be brought, at national and international level, against politicians and the directors of “big pharma” for negligent homicide and premeditated homicide, misrepresentation, knowingly putting the lives of others at risk, repression and blackmail of citizens who have denounced the authorities concerned.



**2** Those in charge of transnational corporations and big business who have organised and carried out disinformation campaigns about the health, climate and biodiversity crisis against the reports and research carried out by independent scientists must be held to account politically and legally, locally and internationally.



This approach and transparency are necessary to help citizens, civil society, the media, enterprises, the courts and the international community to understand what is really happening to the environment and the reactions of their respective governments. There must be an end to impunity for economic actors who have played a role in natural disasters affecting the ability of local communities to produce enough food.

**3** Guarantees and mechanisms of reparation must be provided for the victims of human rights violations committed by transnational corporations and States.

**4** Respect for the right to free, prior and informed consent of indigenous communities by the State and transnational corporations.



## TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS' IMPUNITY

History, What's at Stake and Solutions




## Stop the impunity of transnational corporations

This reference work provides an in-depth analysis of impunity for violations committed by transnational corporations and the existing standards applicable to these entities. It also aims to contribute to the ongoing process, within the UN Human Rights Council, for the drafting of a binding treaty, and exhaustively presents the reasons for its achievement.

Available for free on the CETIM website:

<https://www.cetim.ch/product/transnational-corporations-impunity/>

# IV. WOMEN'S CLAIMS & PROPOSALS



**1** Ensure that the measures put forward by the movements in response to the pandemic are accessible to everyone, with particular attention to those who are most systematically excluded from this aid: women, informal workers, migrants, people of colour, low castes and LGBTQIA+ people.

**2** Guarantee the right to paid leave for all women workers with no loss of income or rights.

**3** Provide economic support – at least a minimum wage – for informal and self-employed women workers.


**4** Include working-class women in leadership positions in public and civil society decision-making processes concerning responses to the crises we face today.

**5** Demand that governments launch campaigns to encourage men and women to share household tasks equally, so that women do not have to bear the main burden of housework.



**6** Increase long-term public investment in areas such as social protection, pensions, universal public health care, free public childcare and other actions that directly affect women.

**7** Aid and financial recovery plans implemented by governments must include social protection measures which take into account the particular circumstances of women and recognise the economy of care.



**8** Provide a guaranteed minimum income for women doing several types of essential care work (including domestic and household work), particularly for those with dependents.

**9** Provide food hampers for families with children when nurseries and schools are closed.



**10** Demand that the government protect LGBTQIA+ people and all marginalised people in the fight against COVID-19, such as policies that only allow men, or women, to leave their homes on certain days.



**11** Decriminalise sex work, provide relief and food aid, offer emergency housing to unhoused transgender and queer people, and support migrant communities in their efforts to access services essential to their survival.

**12** Ensure easily accessible helplines and other publicly accessible communication channels and services for all victims of patriarchal violence as essential services.



**13** Require governments to take responsibility for publicising these helplines and publicly accessible channels of communication through automated services, text messages, bus banners, billboards, screens in public spaces, newspaper advertisements, etc., so that those in need are aware of the existence of these services.

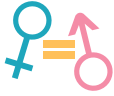
**14** Require governments to provide counselling services for women, marginalised people, the poor, LGBTQIA+ people, migrants, people of colour, older people and disabled people in vulnerable situations and/or victims of violence.

**15** Require governments to provide safe and comfortable alternative shelters, such as hotel rooms and vacant buildings, for women struggling with domestic violence, and to ensure the necessary protection and security in these places; guarantee the continuation of these services in the long term to meet pre-existing needs.



**16** Create women's rights groups and local information campaigns on emergency plans for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, particularly in the most socially vulnerable neighbourhoods.





**17** Establish a system of co-representation of men and women in trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

**18** Mobilise health workers to help women in vulnerable communities, support women workers in precarious situations and/or in the informal economy, and ensure that they are properly paid and provided with protective equipment.

**19** Ensure vertical mobility of working class and LGBTIAQ+ women vis-à-vis white, rich, educated women in NGOs and social movements.



**We hope you have enjoyed your reading,**  
Contact us if you'd like to discuss any of these topics!

**If you are interested in these subjects**  
we recommend our latest books :

This booklet of demands and proposals is taken from the book :

## Une pandémie révélatrice d'un maldéveloppement généralisé



### The Covid-19 pandemic did not fall from the sky.

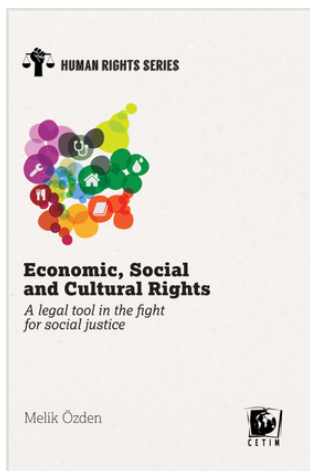
It is part of field causality marked by the decline in biodiversity, the commodification of nature, and inequitable access to healthcare: a multidimensional crisis, constructed through political and economic violence since the early 1970s.

This book tackles the neoliberal system head-on as the historical and political culprit behind the crimes against underprivileged populations, colonised peoples and ecosystems. It questions the post-health crisis neoliberal model presented as more sustainable, more humane, more inclusive and greener: is this model acceptable to social movements ?

### The author : Murad Akincilar

He holds a post-graduate degree in economics and studied at the London School of Economics (LSE), worked as a trade union education and organising delegate and as an innovation attaché at the OECD in Paris, before working as a trade unionist in Switzerland in the 2000s. He also headed the Institute of Political and Social Research (DISA) in Diyarbakir between 2013 and 2018. He is actually international delegate for CETIM.

## Economic, Social and Cultural Rights : A legal tool in the fight for social justice



At a time when the world's multidimensional crisis is plunging billions of persons into poverty, when almost half of humanity is unable to satisfy their essential needs, even as inequalities continue to grow steadily, the fulfillment of economic, social and cultural rights is more than ever urgent.

Although they are recognized at both the national and international level, economic, social and cultural rights remain little known among those for whom they are most important, and at the same time are largely neglected by the political authorities whose responsibility is to promote, protect and fulfill them. In a context of neoliberal globalization in the service of private capital, the fulfillment of these rights is imperative if people are to live in dignity.

This book aims to provide an overview of economic, social and cultural rights. It analyzes the obstacles to their fulfillment, emphasizes states' obligations and presents the human rights mechanisms that victims of violations of these rights (or their representatives) can avail themselves of. It is enriched by examples of cases crowned with success, often emanating from the grass roots struggles of peoples, offering thus a better understanding of these rights that continue to be characterized, wrongly, by certain parties as non-justiciable or complex.

Learn more about the :

- Right to water
- Right to food
- Right to housing
- Right to health
- Right to work
- Right to social security
- Cultural Rights
- Right to education
- Right to self-determination
- Right to non-discrimination

### The author: Melik Özden

Director of CETIM in Geneva, he has been involved in the associative environment for more than a decade, and has advocated for the effective implementation of human rights for peoples and citizens. He has published numerous articles and educational publications on economic, social and cultural rights and on the functioning of UN human rights mechanisms, in particular the Human Rights Council.



<https://www.cetim.ch>

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- With a critical, sourced and original viewpoint on North-South relations and development
- Giving keys to understanding the world and ways of transforming our societies!

# FROM MALDEVELOPMENT TO THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

**By maldevelopment, we mean the model of development advocated by the economic and political elites of the neoliberal capitalist system.**

The ideology underlying the maldevelopment model makes constant and linear economic growth the primary objective of development, which underpins the maximization of profits of dominant economic actors and the unbridled commodification of all aspects of life.

According to the neoliberal doctrine, human beings and the natural environment are essentially commodities in the service of the interests of the dominant minority.

How, in a world where natural resources are not inexhaustible, can we rely on this type of perpetual growth?



The current neoliberal globalization, through an aggressive, neocolonial economic-commercial strategy, ignores the basic rights of peoples. An exit from the **maldevelopment** trap, based on the right to a decolonized and self-determined development based on popular participation is therefore not only necessary, but vital.



**The Declaration on the Right to Development (1986)** places the human beings at the centre, making them both the main actors and the main beneficiaries of development. Encompassing civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights, this Declaration challenges the dominant economic conceptions of development.

Indeed, the Declaration has historically and systematically been obstructed and under attack by the powerful states of the Global North, as it stands in direct opposition to the current policies and practices of the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, the G7 and even NATO.







Faced with this impasse, in 2019, a number of countries in the Global South have launched a process within the UN Human Rights Council to draw up a binding international instrument on this right.

In October 2023, the Council has submitted a draft Covenant on the Right to Development to the United Nations General Assembly. Based on the self-determination of peoples and sovereignty over all their resources within the framework of a democratic and equitable international order, this Covenant should soon be adopted by the General Assembly.

Recognised as a human right for 38 years, **the right to development** is a unique instrument reflecting the universality, interdependence, interrelatedness, indivisibility and mutual reinforcement of all human rights, with an emphasis on the right of peoples to self-determination.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN in 2015 and promoted by the dominant elites, are not a response to the multidimensional crisis. They do not call into question the current economic and trade policies that are at the root of maldevelopment. As their name suggests, they are merely goals, and to achieve them, governments are relying on transnational corporations.

Moreover, the 2030 SDGs will not be achieved, as the UN Secretary-General has been lamenting for several years.

**In this context, the right to a self-determined development is more relevant than ever, and the tool par excellence for social movements to demand food sovereignty, a system based on “One Health”, climate justice and a decolonised international economic order.**



## The right to development

The purpose of this brochure is to present the Declaration on the Right to Development – still largely unknown among most civil society organizations – and relate the evolution of the discussions and what is at stake in its regard within the U.N. human rights instances, all while examining the perspectives it opens.

**Read it for free on cetim’s website:**  
<https://www.cetim.ch/product/the-right-to-development/>



# Together



**let's break with  
maldevelopment !**