The Right to 'De-development':

Restriction of Living Standards of Affluent People
as a Complementary Aspect to the Human Rights Regime

BENJAMIN TOUSSAINT

Henrik NIELSEN
Danish Institute
for Human Rights

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University of Southern Denmark
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Have you ever observed that we pay much more attention to a wise passage when it is quoted than when we read it in the original author?

- Philip G. Hamerton

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Abstract

In light of the environmental constraints humanity faces today, a different prosperity model and general lifestyle, less focused on economic growth is necessary to achieve equity in economic wealth and adequate living standards for all. Mainstream development and environment frameworks largely neglect strategies that focus on behavioural adaptation to these environmental constraints. It is the explicit vocation of the de-development approach to establish a framework of ethics, strategies and policies able to set boundaries on endless economic growth and the excessive, resource-exhausting consumption of luxury goods and services. At the individual level this implicates a restriction of an undue living standard, respectively an undue individual economic capacity to afford endless goods and services. A deliberate interference with individuals’ lifestyles implies a certain risk of state power abuse. Therefore it is beneficial to scrutinise de-development strategies and policies with regard to human rights compliancy. A Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to de-development, applying human rights norms and methodologies to the de-development concept does exactly this. Thus, the human rights framework provides structural and legal means to develop an ethical approach to de-development. This thesis examines the context surrounding the de-development issue, the theoretical background of the concept and its integration into the human rights framework.
Abbreviations:

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)
Africa Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP)

Carbon dioxide (CO2)
Civil and Political Rights (cpRs)
Civil society organisations (CSOs)
Clean Development mechanism (CDM)
Conference of the Parties (COP)
Contraction and Convergence (C&C)
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
Committee on the Right of the Child (CRC)
Council of Europe (CoE)

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (escRs)
European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

General Comment (GC)
Greenhouse Development Rights (GDR)
Greenhouse Gas (GHG)
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Human Development Index (HDI)
Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)
Human Rights Committee (HRC)

International Court of Justice (ICJ)
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Intergovernmental Organisation (IGO)

Joint Implementation (JI)

Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Official development assistance (ODA)
Organisation for economic co-operation and development (OECD)

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)

Responsibility Capacity Index (RCI)

Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP)

Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)

UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR)
UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
United Nations (UN)
United Arab Emirates (UAE)
United States of America (US)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

World Bank (WB)
World Trade Organisation (WTO)
World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
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