



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: Priority Theme: “Strengthening solidarity, social inclusion and social cohesion to accelerate the delivery of the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”**

**Statement submitted by Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Loreto Generalate and VIVAT International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Loreto Generalate, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, and VIVAT International welcome the Commission on Social Development’s focus on solidarity, social inclusion, and social cohesion to strengthen action on commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With a global presence in over 100 countries, we empower women, girls, and communities through educational and development programs that build economic, political, and social capacities, enabling them to advocate for their rights. We are committed to social justice, ensuring that all people – especially women and girls – can fully enjoy their rights and freedoms, while also caring for the planet.

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, from the 1995 World Summit on Social Development, set out ten critical commitments to promote the well-being of people and the planet. These commitments are reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Together with the recently adopted Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact, and Declaration on Future Generations, we have a pathway to a world where no one is left behind. Unfortunately, thirty years after the World Summit and a decade after the Sustainable Development Goals, neither has been fully realized. Without political will, the Pact for the Future risks the same fate.

The 2024 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Report paints a sobering picture. Only 17 percent of the SDG targets are on track to be achieved with over 30 percent either stalled or regressed. Vulnerable populations, especially in developing nations, continue to face unprecedented poverty and hunger. Gender inequality remains a pressing issue, with limited progress in achieving gender parity in public life and private sector leadership roles for women. Globally, violence against women and girls is increasing, both physically and virtually.

Secretary General Antonio Guterres has urged the global community to accelerate action, saying, “we must not let up on our 2030 promise to end poverty, protect the planet and leave no one behind.” We and our global networks are committed to helping achieve the 2030 Agenda, and work to promote solidarity, social inclusion and social cohesion in the communities in which we live and work. However, across the globe, we are challenged by the systemic and structural barriers and institutional corruption that prevents sustainable development from occurring.

Our networks report that, beyond the lack of access to education, healthcare, food security, and labour protection—factors that drive poverty and social exclusion—marginalized and minority groups also face systemic discrimination, harmful cultural norms, and institutional corruption. These barriers further hinder their ability to improve their socioeconomic status and overall well-being.

Unequal access to quality health services and medicines leaves low-income nations vulnerable to preventable diseases. Despite the availability of a vaccine, cervical cancer mortality rates remain highest in developing countries. The World Health Organization reports that low- and middle-income nations account for the majority of cervical cancer deaths, driven by inequities in access to HPV vaccination, screening, and treatment services – disparities rooted in social and economic determinants of health.

The path forward demands urgent and transformative action. In communities around the world, quality education, universal healthcare, and social protections are proven to lift people out of poverty, build resilience, and foster solidarity, social inclusion and cohesion. We call for bold, comprehensive social policies that dismantle barriers

and ensure equal access for all. It is imperative that all peoples, in all their diversity, are supported by social policies that create systemic change and promote sustainable social development.

Research shows that in countries where quality education, universal health care and other social protections are provided to everyone, the whole community benefits, with greater participation and social cohesion. Equally important for creating solidarity, social inclusion and social cohesion is the resolution of conflict and the establishment of peace.

We also urge immediate reforms to the global financial system to close the \$4 trillion 2030 Sustainable Development Goals funding gap and accelerate investments in sustainable development. The time to act is now – failure to do so will leave millions behind.

In solidarity with our networks on the ground, we appeal for coordinated action at the international level to put into action the commitments made in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We join with other civil society organizations and urge governments and global leaders to:

- Implement the recently adopted Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations immediately.
- Reform international financial and trade systems to address global economic inequities and prioritize environmental sustainability.
- Redirect resources from military to social and economic development, ensuring financial investment in the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Build resilient social protection systems, integrating accessible health, education, and rural development, particularly for marginalized communities. Concrete investments in sustainable livelihoods and economic resilience are essential to prevent people from falling back into poverty.
- Implement policies ensuring equal and equitable access to quality education, healthcare, social protection, and living wages for all, without discrimination.
- Localize sustainable development efforts to meet the unique needs of communities, with immediate priorities on universal health coverage, inclusive education, and adequate housing.
- Establish a Global Fund for Social Protection to strengthen social equity and stability.
- Ensure the right to health through universal coverage, resilient health systems, and equitable access to quality medicines and health products.
- Remove barriers to humanitarian aid, prioritize community resilience to hunger and food insecurity. Prioritize community preparedness through preventive frameworks that strengthen early-warning systems and provide ongoing social protection, particularly for communities at risk of protracted crises.
- Increase investments in science, technology, and innovation, especially for developing countries. Target programs that facilitate access to environmentally sound technologies, which can be immediately applied to health, education, and climate resilience to address poverty and inequality directly.
- Expand essential services for children and youth, focusing on education, healthcare, and vocational training, while prioritizing youth-centred policies and opportunities that equip youth with the skills they need to contribute meaningfully to society.

- Implement gender equality policies to eliminate violence and discrimination against women and girls, ensuring their full participation in leadership and decision-making in all spheres of society.
- Involve people with lived experience, particularly women and girls, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of social policies.

These actions are crucial to achieving a fair, just, and sustainable future for all.

Endorsed by:

- Casa Generalizia della Societa del Sacro Cuore
- Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul
- Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc.
- Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
- Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries
- The Grail

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