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**Priority Theme: Socially just transition towards sustainable
development: the role of digital technologies on social
development and well-being of all**

Statement submitted by Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme, a non-governmental organization 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.

The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

As we continue to grow in the twenty-first century where social and digital technologies are at the forefront of human frontiers, we need socially just policies especially for those voices that need to be heard and not left behind. Cult afflicted members who suffer greatly and have serious needs also have much to contribute towards closing the real digital divide and sustainability.

The Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme has observed the real human tragedy of the impact of destructive sects on social development in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In order to address the issue of equality and the transition to sustainability, it is important to understand the full nature of destructive cults and its critical role in digital technologies. Some of the earliest successes in the internet digital world were cult organization internet businesses that became multi-million-dollar enterprises. The Heaven's Gate UFO group led its members to commit mass suicide in San Diego, California. They had one of the most successful internet businesses back in the 1990s.

Socially just policies and equality in human rights is truly violated when dealing with these insulated and isolated communities. The totalitarian and authoritarian power structure of many cult groups have an intrinsic adversarial relationship with mainstream society. Mainstream societal government structures provide checks and balances while working towards transparency and accountability. The 2021 Commission for Social Development has a vital role to perform when dealing with individual human rights and the well-being of all concerning legal protections for the violation of established social policies. Cult victims lack access to human rights protections promoted by the Commission for Social Development. Informed consent is vital and we at Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme support the Commission's efforts to advance these human rights.

Many cults have developed policies and practices that seriously restrict sect member access to information that would expose their deceptions. Individual informed consent rights are blocked by stealthy digital technology that prevents access to make an honest comparison for informed consent purposes. Privacy rights are also violated when almost all private activity of individual members is carefully monitored and record keeping storage is kept hidden. These violated rights are carefully blocked by digital technology and fabricated documentation. We at the European Federation of Centres of Information and Research on Sectarianism have first-hand testimony of former cult members to support these concerns of violated rights. The 2021 Commission on Social Development is vital in addressing policy issues surrounding these critical concerns to digital technology human rights concerns. Digital inequality is a pressing need that impacts social inequities. The former cults members though healing and recovery outcomes provide a valuable resource to contribute towards addressing digital inequities. It comes from a background of privileged highly specialized digital technology training and experience in concealment towards non-members. Even active sect members whom cult leaders deemed unworthy of access towards informed consent rights use digital concealment techniques.

The digital divide in cultic communities is quite striking because of the difference between the privileged leadership class and the rank and file members who do not usually know what is really hidden from them. Financial inequalities abound between the sect leadership class and the rank and file members due to the serious lack of financial transparency. Fraud concerns about money go undetected when sect organizations work under the heading of non-profit organizations with government recognition that lack critical digital financial information. Former cult leaders supply

critical digital financial records hidden from mainstream society and even regular cult members. Civil society tax laws are violated, and governments globally suffer when former sect members needing tax funded social service assistance and medical needs. Many former cult members who leave their group are financially impoverished by years of loyal sacrificial service. Governments around the world provide tax funded assistance to former sect members. Digital financial transparency is sorely needed when dealing with cult leaders who live a well-funded privileged lifestyle and regular members are impoverished by their sacrificial living. We at Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme support proper reporting including digital technologies that former cult members have revealed about deceitful sect organizations and lack of much-needed financial transparency.

Restored financial resources would provide sorely needed funds for a marginalized group of victimized cultic communities. Digital technology requires proper funding and even more so as we proceed from 2020 forward. Our daily lives are increasingly interfaced with digital technology and many cult members lack proper resources. Resulting financial limits imposed by cult practices and policy in action. This kind of cultic enforced financial dependency restricts even further the imposed digital divide that contributes to the enslavement to the cult organization. The cult member's lack of funds also creates lack of critical information without proper digital technology processing.

Medical needs lack digital technology research due to the hostility of many cults to medical treatment outside of their closed communities. Former cult members commonly complain about lack of medical treatment due to numerous sect organizations that will not provide funding for medical care. Private care is perceived as simply too expensive and diverts money away from the cult. Digital technologies equip with adequate training assist breaking the digital divide in medical care. Cult organizations are truly threatened by required medical reporting in treatment. Minor children and babies do not get medical attention when needed medical reporting is denied access by certain sect organizations. Sad to say, many preventable deaths and medically curable injuries are rooted in hostile cultic practices to mainstream society medical care. Governments around the world will end up tax funding these inequities and medical digital technology reporting could prevent many of these unwanted tragedies. COVID-19 digital medical reporting is vital to this worldwide pandemic. Limited cult organizations have already deceived government agencies concerning COVID-19 and spread this dangerous disease because of deceitful digital medical information misleading civil authorities about their compliance with COVID-19 restrictions.

Human rights civil digital reporting standards need transparent policies without discrimination conflicts. The 2021 Commission on Social Development can truly advance such transparent policies. We at Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme believe these considerations could provide policy progress for the future.

Access to the digital media requiring statutory human rights protection policies and proper notification by cult organizations are presently in conflict. Disclosure by former cult leaders provides vital digital information parallel to former computer hackers who now work for government agencies with privileged information. Deceitful digital information and suppression of factual truth needs exposure for needed legal changes for the support of sound policies for pressing needed changes.

Many sects do not provide retirement funded benefits for seniors and this includes the lack of digital technology benefits for older persons. They lack the necessary digital technology portals a growing number of government agencies are

using for preparing eligible benefits submission. This points to the lack of planning and funding for retirement with lack of informed consent.

Governments around the world will face lifelong sect members who have no retirement benefits and tax funded resources will pay for these deficiencies. Many cults receive retirements funds due to not providing resources for that purpose but goes to the cult organization.

Digital technology policies with civil societies concerning older persons' retirement is a powerful tool. The 2021 Commission on Social Development could develop digital technology tools to train and equip older persons of their human rights. Transparent digital technology training and awareness is needed in the senior community where elder cult members know early enough how to prepare for retirement benefits. The digital divide needs closing here especially and we at the Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme consider this digital technology solution towards retirement deficiencies. We would appreciate the support of the 2021 Commission on Social Development legal and policy changes that would close that digital divide.
