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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: strategies for the eradication of poverty to
achieve sustainable development for all**

Statement submitted by the East Eagle Foundation, 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.



Statement

East Eagle Foundation is a Congolese rights-based non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. It is dedicated chiefly to advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities and is also involved in the prevention of disabilities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The organization represents a network of more than 2,000 members and advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities.

As you are aware, 15 per cent of the world's population is estimated to live with a disability according to the joint report of the World Bank and the World Health Organization. Available data indicate that persons with disabilities are at higher risk of poverty than their counterparts without disabilities in both developed and developing countries. That is because they are more likely to work in the informal sector. Measures to promote decent work and employment, reduce poverty and enhance income security for persons with disabilities are among the strategies for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Unfortunately, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where over 10.5 million persons are estimated to have a disability (15 per cent of the population), no such measures have been taken, and social protection, which plays an important role in helping persons with disabilities to maintain a sustainable level of income, preventing them from sliding into poverty, is largely overlooked, given the numerous crises affecting the country.

In the light of the relevant economic, social and environmental factors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Eagle Foundation is helping to address accessibility in all spheres of life and to tackle discrimination, as efforts in those areas would help to boost persons with disabilities' participation in development. The Foundation also empowers persons with disabilities through the application of economic concepts and an entrepreneurial approach in order to enhance their quality of life and living standards. Working together with organizations for persons with disabilities and other partners involved in championing and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, East Eagle Foundation is implementing a programme enabling persons with disabilities to participate in entrepreneurship training and to receive financial support in order to develop a sense of autonomy, since entrepreneurship can help persons with disabilities participate in the job market and be socially and economically active, as far as possible, depending on their situation. This, in turn, contributes towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the promotion of sustained economic growth.
