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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 Sant Nirankari Mandal, Delhi, Inc., 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

Poverty refers to the lack of means necessary to meet basic personal needs such as food, clothing and shelter. Economic growth and education are generally said to be powerful instruments for reducing poverty and improving the quality of life. True, but poor do not want to put on hold first to stabilize the economy and fix the eroded education system. The poor will endorse anything that brings them immediate emotional comfort. Everything about the material world and the life of humans seems wicked. Religion makes poverty an enviable position that oozes with moral superiority. Religion is the vehicle of spiritual awakening moral consciousness and socio-cultural values that suits life in all forms in a well-knit society. Religion is the therefore primary tool to empower the poor and rich alike. (Here Religion, short of rites, rituals and symbols is used as synonym of spirituality).

Physical poverty is a curse and spiritual deprivation is worse. The human mind, requires a spiritual universe for itself, anything less will never satisfy thinking person. The economic terms 'Haves' and 'Have-nots' are seen as "The enlightened" and "The ignorant" in terms of spirituality which can bring both rich and poor on the same ecstatic wavelength. There is no line of demarcation where the poverty ends and the richness begins.

Emotional Brotherhood is the biggest thing that True Religion brings to society. Spiritually awakened persons believe that all their assets, material and mental belong to divinity and we, as trustees only, are ordained to use them for common good of whole human race. Rising above dogmas of caste, colour, creed they are respectful to others. This harmonized relationship with self, others and universe brings synergy, sharing and promotes social inclusion with spiritual vision.

For the Social Development that meets the need of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, Mission handles this malady through spirituality by changing mindset of its devotees that leads to their habit of living a contented life. With the towering trait of tolerance, they lead a self-reliant family life and maintain order in society. Spiritual stability is a key to a secure and stable society. The higher human values that spring from the spiritual basis of our being needs reawakening through a non-violent spiritual renaissance.

World's children 1995 Report of UNICEF mentions "unless investment in children in made all of humanity's most fundamental long-term problems will remain fundamental long-term problems". Many other studies suggest that emotions like fanaticism and fundamentalism are actually drilled into the conscience of little minds well before they manifest as destruction causing elements of society. Spirituality provides a strong base for a meaningful life, children are not only moulded but also unfolded spiritually. Devotees willing their children to adopt human values and obedience are taught through devotees own conduct. Besides, Special congregations, Mission intensively attend to youth's growing needs of modern society. The youth and children find paradise in the feet of parents and parents feel safe in the hands of enlightened children.

Poverty is often connected with social evils such as bribery corruption, violence, discrimination against children and women. These are secondary effects that can cause cyclic effect to aggravate poverty. Religion plays important role in prevention and removal of these evil effects of poverty. Mandal has prohibited drinking and alcoholism, which become key cause of domestic violence and resultant poverty. Mandal also provides guidelines for simplifying various ceremonies to prevent

unnecessary materialistic race and hence dilute the feeling of poverty and comparisons. Marriages have been made simple and mass-marriage functions are encouraged where marriages happen with no pomp and show. Many other functions including Death ceremonies have also been made simple and economical.

Physical efficiency and intellectual alertness are dangerous if spiritual illiteracy prevails. Study of genesis and fall of civilizations by Arnold Toynbee, a distinguished historian reveals that “each time the people have lost faith in Religion; its civilization succumbed to social disintegration. The new civilization that replaced such downfall was inspired by true religion through spiritual awakening”. We are heading towards a set of economic, social and environmental crisis and the only way to change things is to rethink and recognize it as a spiritual issue, a challenge that goes to the core of who we are as human beings.

Concept of one God for all foresees the idea of one religion for all. Sant Nirankari Mission globally known as Universal Brotherhood Mission unfolds the concept of one earth, one family and one religion through a living revelation of Fatherhood of God, the same for all religions. Caught in the cobwebs of rites and rituals, religion has lost its gravity resulting in jarring communal divisions. When religion means knowledge and relationship with one God, there does not arise the question of any contentious and emotive issue of conversions. Votary of “Peace not Pieces”, Nirankari Baba founded Mission’s motto “Religion Unites, Never Divides” and stressed, “Know One, Believe in One and Become One”. This is the eternal message of all the saints and sages down the ages. This finds the Mission as the present milestone in the mainstream of spirituality.

Having lost its gravity, terrorism fueled by religion is the greatest enemy of humanity and challenge to social development. The enlightened are citizens of the world where boundaries can be taken as meeting points as against lines of division. It is important that UN enables union of religions with common agenda of Brotherhood to end differences. Sant Nirankari Mandal has been attempting to spread the message of love and brotherhood world-wide. His Holiness addressed several conferences on Inter-faith, Harmony, Peaceful co-existence, Seminar of Universalism and South-East Asia Harmony Conclave in India; He conveyed the message of universal brotherhood in 27-National European Parliament in Strasbourg and inaugurated 8th International Conference on Corporate Governance in London.

The Social Aspect: The social initiatives of the Sant Nirankari Mission include donating about nine lakh units of Blood in the last three decades. Tree plantation running into millions, Cleanliness Drives all across the country, Enrichment through value based education, support during natural calamities, Free Health and Eye Check-up Camps, Vocational Centers to empower women and youth, are a few among many others. These contributions have given the Mission Consultative Status with the United Nations; awards and recognition from various Governments and Organisations across the globe including the ‘Queens Golden Jubilee Award’ by Her Majesty, the Queen of England, The ‘Gandhi Peace Award’ and the recently announced ‘Supreme Spiritual Icon of the Year 2017’ Award by WCH at UN Headquarters.

Her Holiness Nirankari Satguru Mata Savinder Hardev Ji Maharaj has recently given a life changing message that, “The world needs to be united as a Family, tolerating, accepting and loving each other, keeping in mind the watchword “GODFIDENCE”, having complete faith and confidence in God, truly proving our image of God.

Charity that matters Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and his wife Melinda have contributed billions of dollars via their charitable foundation to date. Appreciating their spirited role in the community services, the philosopher writer Maulana Wahududdin Khan has given an invaluable suggestion to Mr. Gates that a far greater option for them would be “To establish a Spiritual University” or Universal Institute for research on Spiritual Sciences. (Times of India 4 Feb 2017), In the words of Bill Gates himself, “I have no use of money beyond a certain point. Its utility is entirely in building an organization and getting the resources to the poorest in the world”.

An Auspicious Thought: For the enlightened rich, there is no sin greater than letting others live in ignorance. The Sant Nirankari Mission is determined to inspire people’s enduring relationship with God for upliftment of the whole Human Race. Through an article in (Times of India 29 June 2017 – The need for Spiritual University) we suggested a handshake between a Charity Organization and a Spiritual Mission that will lay open before the world the charter of “A Spiritual University”, where the sole aim of education will be to educate the Soul.”
