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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: Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Statement submitted by Legion of Good Will/Legião da Boa Vontade, 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

Given the priority theme of the 61st session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development of creating full and productive employment and decent work for all, we, from the Legion of Good Will (LGW), present our experience with the *Good Will Apprentice* program, which has inserted adolescents and young people into the world of work at a time of record youth unemployment.

According to the report “Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022,” published by the International Labour Organization, the global youth unemployment rate (those aged between 15 and 24) is more than three times the adult rate. The major transformations that society is going through, including those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing geopolitical conflicts, have added to the stress and concerns experienced by the new generations, making the painful transition to adulthood even harder.

The Legion of Good Will was founded in Brazil in 1950 and currently joins efforts with the LGW of Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, the United States, and Portugal in a large network of social assistance, education, humanitarian, and social communication actions that provides more than 7 million acts of services and benefits to vulnerable populations every year.

Good Will Apprentice Program

We created the *Good Will Apprentice* program with the aim of training and integrating young people into the world of work, offering them professional qualifications and reducing the disadvantages associated with their lack of professional experience. In Brazil, Apprenticeship Law No. 10.097/2000 determines that every medium and large company must hire people aged between 14 and 24 as apprentices to help reduce youth unemployment.

The first step in our program is to welcome young people to our social service centers so we can get to know them and identify if their rights have been violated. Also, we offer guidelines on their rights and access to goods and services, seeking to meet the needs we had previously identified. The primary target audience is vulnerable adolescents and young people at social risk aged between 14 and 24, whose families are beneficiaries of cash transfer programs and who: were previously victims of child labor, have left or are under social and educational measures in open regime, are in foster care, or are people with disabilities.

After learning about the demands reported by each of them, our team (educators, pedagogues, psychologists, and social workers) monitors and guides them through social service and, if necessary, refers them to other services offered by the social assistance network.

The second step is the integration process, through which the program is presented, highlighting that it comprises both hands-on activities in a professional environment at the company that hired them and theoretical activities at the LGW, meaning that the teenager is not only starting a job, but rather participating in a more comprehensive program that will introduce them into the world of work.

The structure of the program and the Apprenticeship Law are explained to the potential participants so they can see if the proposal matches their profile. The future apprentices are introduced to key aspects when joining a company (concerning their professional expectations), and individual development plans are drafted along with them.

Theoretical activities are held once a week and focus on developing skills such as emotional intelligence, teamwork, enterprising spirit, resilience, problem solving, and analytical vision, in addition to bringing content on human rights, mental health, and the labor market.

Our units in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasília have 1,500 openings and offer courses in the areas of Management, Retail, Industrial Manufacturing, Telematics, and Food, in line with the demands of the local job markets. Always with “*a view beyond the intellect*,” as laid down in the pedagogical approach of the Legion of Good Will, the Organization’s teams are attentive to the emotions and uncertainties that typically affect this age group.

Our unique aspect is that we apply the Pedagogy of Affection (for children up to 10 years old) and the Ecumenical Citizen Pedagogy (from the age of 11 onwards), created by the President of the Legion of Good Will, the Brazilian educator José de Paiva Netto. They take into account the individuals in their entirety, encompassing aspects within their spiritual and biopsychosocial dimensions. This approach enables apprentices to grow both as human beings and professionals, thus opening up possibilities for them to engage in productive activities, creating conditions for their full enjoyment of citizenship.

When Paiva Netto inaugurated the Educational Institute of the Legion of Good Will, in São Paulo to the community, he declared: “*Here one studies—brain and heart are formed. This is the Pedagogy of God, who is Love, the Pedagogy that enables individuals to live the ecumenical citizenship, which is established through the full exercise of spiritual, human, and social solidarity. In the Ecumenical Citizen Pedagogy and the Pedagogy of Affection (and therefore of Love and Caring), the Spirit plays an extremely important role in our work. However, when preparing the youth and adults for living in this material world of unprecedented technology—and, paradoxically, nowadays so unstable for those who are working hard for their own future—we must take into highest consideration that students have to be taught efficiently because of the demanding requirements of the competitive labor market they will be getting into. Moreover, this has to be done in such a way that they do not pursue a career for which they have been prepared, but that will no longer exist at the end of the course. It is crucial, therefore, that they receive an effective education so they become fearless and enterprising and may overcome the supervening events that, at any moment, challenge society and frighten off the masses. . . . It will be no good—let us say for argument’s sake—having bold plans if there is no one who has been duly instructed to put them into action. For this very reason, take care of the Spirit, improve human beings, and everything will be transformed for the better!*”

With these words we reaffirm our commitment to the inclusion of new generations, making ourselves available to authorities and activists attending the 61st session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development to share experiences and seek joint solutions for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.