



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
28 November 2022

English only

Commission for Social Development

Sixty-first session

6–15 February 2023

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 [Casa Generalizia della Società Del Sacro Cuore; Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent De Paul; Congregation of the Mission; Congregation of Our Lady of Mount Carmel – Carmelite NGO; Congregations of St. Joseph; Edmund Rice International; Fondazione Proclade Internazionale - Onlus; Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Loreto Generalate; International Presentation Association; Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers; Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc.; Passionists International; Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary; Salesian Missions, Inc.; School Sisters of Notre Dame; Sisters of Charity Federation; Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur; Society of Catholic Medial Missionaries; 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

As members and partners of the Justice Coalition of Religious – a global family of Catholic Sisters, Brothers, priests, and their partners in mission – we submit to this 61st Commission on Social Development our deep concern for the structural injustices embedded in today’s world of work. From each region of the world, our members have identified that certain social groups are particularly at risk of unemployment, unsafe working conditions, and unjust wages. These groups of concern include women, migrants, youth in rural communities, people experiencing homelessness or inadequate housing, and persons with disabilities.

The Claretian Missionaries in Nigeria and several of our congregations present in Uganda, for example, have observed that rural youth are facing a debilitating dearth of employment prospects. While governments have made some efforts to provide job skilling programmes to young people, the vast majority of these programmes are available only in urban settings and are not fit for rural purpose. Rural youth find that the programmes do not address their particular needs or prepare them for the types of work that they are likely to obtain and that funding for such programmes is insufficient in rural settings. As a result, young people in rural communities have become highly vulnerable to trafficking and bonded labour. In Kenya, the Salesians of Don Bosco are not only offering quality job and life skills training for youth through the Don Bosco Tech Africa, but also ensuring decent-work outcomes for their alumni via “Job Service Offices” in every training centre that follow up with their graduates at their places of employment. Their Service Officers’ Quality Manual has also been utilized in Mozambique.

Our members also express strongly that migrant communities and unorganized workers are at a particularly elevated risk of unsafe working conditions and exploitation. Claretian Missionaries in Bogota, Colombia is responding to the labour access needs of persons who were Casa Generalizia della suddenly by violent conflict, environmental disaster, or development projects by supporting them in entrepreneurship projects. In rural Colombia, they are also providing legal counsel and accompaniment to communities seeking to avoid displacement by claiming rights to lands that support their self-employment. Salesians of Don Bosco in Tamil Nadu, India have observed that unorganised workers and migrant workers suffer greatly due to their exclusion from the national labour legal framework (e.g., no social securities, labour collectives, hour limitations, minimum wages, monitoring of occupational health and safety conditions, proper shelter, or sanitation in their workplaces or employer-provided dwellings).

The overrepresentation of women in unpaid care work and informal domestic work, gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace, heightened vulnerability to labour trafficking, and unequal wages continue to place women at a disadvantage when it comes to obtaining and being fairly compensated for decent work. The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth in Bihar, India have made it their policy to ensure equal wages and common standards for working hours and expectations among staff members of different genders in their community houses. The School Sisters of Notre Dame are addressing the gender dimensions of gainful work opportunities through their Caroline Center in Maryland, USA, which provides women from low-income backgrounds with tuition-free, comprehensive education and leadership and career-skills training for jobs in healthcare.

Members of the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries in the Philippines have also cited that “regional wage boards,” which establish a minimum wage on a region-by-region basis, fail to take into account the increased cost of essential goods in more remote and impoverished parts of the country. Such an approach to wage

setting actually sustains existing income inequalities by region and deepens economic injustice across the country. They have also witnessed a significant rise in job insecurity as the trend toward work contractualization and flexibilization (part-time, casual, contractual, and online platform-based work) continues.

With regard to the relationship between housing and employment, the Famvin Homeless Alliance (including the Congregation of the Mission, Company of Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, and Sisters of Charity Federation) has undertaken the 13 Houses Campaign to house the homeless in 156 countries with adequate social service protections. They view this effort to move people into supportive housing as an essential step toward breaking down homelessness as a barrier to employment and union membership.

We draw from these experiences and settings to recommend the following to Member States:

- Amend the national approach to youth skilling to better address the particular needs of rural youth, including through consultation of rural youth, representation of rural people in programme leadership and design, public funding for non-governmental programmes that are already well established and support rural students' access to those centers; involvement of industry leaders in providing guidance and equipment that tailor training to current labor demands
- Undertake all actions listed under Objective 6 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration
- Ratify and align national labour codes with the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
- Ensure all labour codes include provisions for unorganized workers and migrant labourers
- Implement all provisions of the International Labor Organization's "Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015" and "Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019"
- Codify the right to organize through workers' associations on the national level
- Establish national grievance cells for complaints in any language of wage theft, wage discrimination, unsafe working conditions, bonded or forced labour, exploitation, wrongful termination of employment
- Furnish all registered, private-sector entities with a standard training on national and local rights and grievance mechanisms, requiring, as a condition of registration renewal, submission of evidence of employee training upon hire and on an annual basis thereafter
- Examine the European Pillar of Social Rights to assess its adaptability for other nations
- Adjust labour migration policies and visa quotas to better reflect the demographic gaps between the ages of various nations' populations
- Establish job skilling and language training programmes for migrants, especially in nations whose populations have a higher average age
- Reevaluate national requirements for academic or skill qualifications and invest in more thorough, nuanced assessment of qualification equivalencies between nations to reduce underemployment of migrants

- Codify nationally the principle of “equal pay for equal work,” regardless of sex, gender identity, country of origin, race, religion, or any other personal characteristic
- Leverage digital or distance learning platforms at the national or state level to offer language training as well as multi-lingual labour-rights training to all recipients of work visas
- Strengthen regulations and increase investment in national labour-monitoring mechanisms to enable greater frequency and intensity of inspections for all workplaces, especially those employing a large number of “unskilled” labourers
- Promote the political independence (non-affiliation) of trade unions to ensure that political identities of workers do not become a barrier to their membership or enjoyment of protection
- Establish social protection floors and a national fund for support of workers in the country who lose essential wages in the context of an environmental disaster or public health emergency, providing that this scheme shall be made available to both native-born and migrant labourers in recognition of their contribution to the national economy and that it shall be made accessible to them in any location
- Apply workplace safety standards to part-time, contract, and online-platform workers and include personal protective equipment provision for public-facing workers in times of infectious disease outbreaks
- Establish and enforce national minimum wage standards while allowing for regional standards that exceed the national standard
- Levy a tax on employers of migrant and unorganized workers to ensure the availability of funds for social security and welfare schemes to serve their employees
- Include provisions for skill training and remedial education for displaced young persons in national disaster response plans

We look forward to collaborating with all States on achieving decent work for all through these measures.
