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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: social integration**

Statement submitted by International Federation of Social Workers, 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.

* E/CN.5/2009/1.



Statement

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) is a global organization striving for social justice, human rights and social development through the development of social work, best practices and international cooperation between social workers and their professional organizations (www.ifsw.org).

IFSW supports the theme of the 47th meeting of the Commission for Social Development “Promoting Social Integration”, with special attention to issues of poverty eradication and full employment.

Social integration as a concept speaks to all members of society having full access to the opportunities, rights and services available to mainstream society. Social integration of people should encompass all realms of society and should include: cultural, social, political, economic and the spiritual. Social integration should not imply the imposition of uniformity, but a respect for diversity, protection of human rights for all, and equality of opportunity.

We recommend the following:

The Commission on Social Development should support social integration by supporting those organizations that promote interaction and solidarity at all levels of society.

Funding needs to be committed for policies that support social integration of migrants, refugees, and indigenous people, promoting integration that supports a more just and equitable society. These policies need to be all encompassing and should include housing, education, employment as well as social service programs and policies.

Decision making regarding social integration approaches needs to be conducted in a participatory approach, which includes the voices of all groups and members of society.

Social Integration and Employment:

IFSW considers that social development programmes, whether linked to structural adjustment or other emergency economic recovery programmes, must have the following elements:

Education and lifelong learning programmes.

Supportive work programmes for those whose physical, mental or emotional problems or caring responsibilities prevent them from taking standard jobs.

Social protection to sustain those unable to raise income through work, with annual targets to reduce poverty.

Respect for the UN Conventions on Human Rights and the Rights of the Child and arrangements to promote the education and welfare of children.

Consultation with local communities and civil society organisations and the active involvement of “excluded” individuals and communities in decisions which affect them (www.ifsw.org).

Social Integration and Poverty:

IFSW supports the Millennium Development Goals especially as they relate to the eradication of poverty. The millennium goals resonate deeply with the core principles of social work, notably service and social justice.

IFSW believes that:

- National and international social and economic policies must be directed toward reducing extreme poverty.
 - Extreme poverty often results in compromised health and maternal deaths among poor women and children. Policies and programmes that integrate improved health for women and children must be supported; these policies should also include mental health.
 - Community-building initiatives that work to restore poor communities to a level of functioning that can support health and self-sufficient families need to be funded and supported.
 - While alleviating extreme poverty that is life threatening certainly must have the greater priority, governments need to work toward ensuring that all people have adequate income to enhance their well-being.
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