



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
23 April 2012

Original: English

Substantive session of 2012

New York, 2-27 July 2012

Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*

High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Statement submitted by 5th Pillar, 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 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2012/100.



Statement

5th Pillar, a non-profit citizens' coalition against corruption has been working for the last six years in the area of fighting corruption, through empowering citizens at the grass-roots level and spreading the right of access to information in rural areas, where large sections of people, especially those below the poverty line, are either deprived of or denied their fundamental rights. Based on its field work on anti-corruption and the related study of the factors triggered by corruption that impact on or diminish the positive results of numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working across the world, 5th Pillar has observed that achieving the Millennium Development Goals will become a more distant goal, unless corruption is "held by its horn" and targeted with much stronger political will. Governments should come down heavily on corrupt politicians who misappropriate public funds meant for: (a) the eradication of poverty and hunger; (b) universal primary education; (c) alleviating gender discrimination; (d) lowering the rate of child mortality; (e) raising the level of maternal health; (f) tackling HIV/AIDS, malaria and high-impact diseases; and (g) ensuring environmental sustainability.

If such governmental intervention does not happen proactively owing to a lack of political will, forethought and vision on the part of the political leadership, then pressure from the public, NGOs and the media needs to be mounted heavily to make that happen. The Millennium Development Goals, as stated in the charge of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are all invariably and extremely challenged by the ubiquitous social malaise called "corruption", which is all-permeating and deep-rooted in underdeveloped and developing societies. Corruption is the "shaky" foundation on which the above-mentioned Goals and their efforts are resting, as all strive towards their achievement. The world's citizens have to awaken to the alarming effects of corruption, which has been sidelined many times by a majority of NGOs whose complete focus is needed on their main line of activity or their stated objective. In the process, many fail to notice that, one climbs up 10 steps, but slips down 5 or more steps owing to the hidden, seeping dangers and ill effects of corruption, which undermines and dilutes the commendable selfless work of countless individuals and NGOs working passionately towards the achievement of the Goals.

Corruption breeds and fuels discrimination defined by economic abilities and gender bias and capacity bias, all of which prevent access by citizens living in poverty to reasonable employment and deprive them of decent work, which could otherwise lead to eradicating poverty. Inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth can be achieved faster and more effectively by reading the warning signs, and sounding a "red alert" to the entire community of Millennium Development Goals stakeholders, who should take into immediate consideration "zero tolerance to corruption" to make the Goals more achievable in the time frame envisioned by UNDP and the global community.