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Statement submitted by Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, 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

All of us are aware that the gap between the rich and poor is growing globally. This is indeed a threat to social, economic and political stability. The global unrest spreading day by day, out of the frustrations of people lacking a decent job, a secure home, a safe environment and a better future for their children, is an awakening call to Governments and society as a whole for an urgent global new deal to rebalance and restructure the current unjust socioeconomic system.

There is no alternative to providing good education and no long-term solution to poverty other than education. We need education to teach people to live in harmony with nature and with one another, recognizing that every individual has a need and a right to a decent life.

There is a need to encourage small farmers and small and medium entrepreneurs by giving incentives to produce food and other commodities locally. As we move into a borderless world economy, finance-driven globalization has been proved to be a failure (as demonstrated by the recent crises). It is essential to eradicate poverty and reduce the gap between the rich and the poor globally. Cooperatives are powerful instruments for economic empowerment and social transformation. We need economic morality in building sustainable communities where every human being has a right to lead a decent and humane life.

A study carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 10 African countries shows that women rarely own land and, when they do, their holdings tend to be smaller and less fertile than those of men. If women farmers had the same access to inputs and training as males, yields could be raised by between 10 and 20 per cent. Employment of women and young people is crucial to eradicate poverty and for equitable economic growth, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Strengthening public-private partnerships is seen as inevitable, as more and more Governments are unable to meet the needs of their citizens. Many private organizations are in a better position to contribute to social development without sacrificing their fair share of profit. As mentioned by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in his report to the Conference at its thirteenth session (UNCTAD (XIII)/1), the worrying trend in recent years has been the growing influence of financial markets in bending public policy and resources to their own needs and interests. What we need is a regulatory framework and to make corporate social responsibility mandatory based on social justice.