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Statement submitted by Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 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

Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty and prevent workplace abuses

The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology urges the United Nations and its affiliated organizations to take action to prevent the exploitation of workers in developing countries. Recent publications and news stories continue to highlight the plight of workers subjected to significant workplace abuses in developing countries. Companies and nations that pursue economic growth and profits without regard to the decent work principles outlined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and subsequently affirmed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2008/18, are condemning a vast number of workers to a life of poverty and degradation. It is our belief that more can and should be done to hold accountable those agencies that demonstrate a disregard of the decent work agenda of ILO and local labour laws.

Developing countries and organizations that tolerate the abuse of workers in the name of improving the economy of the nation are setting up a system of inequity in which their most vulnerable citizens are unable to lift themselves and family members out of poverty. Ratification and implementation by member States of ILO fundamental principles for decent work is clearly a prerequisite for addressing workplace abuses; however, additional measures are needed to confront organizations and nations that turn a blind eye to these principles. Unfortunately, industry “watchdog” groups have been inconsistent or ineffective in combating these workplace abuses in developing countries.

We strongly believe that an impartial, respected organization needs to take control of this situation until ILO principles are fully integrated within multinational organizations doing business in developing countries. We therefore urge the United Nations to create an agency or mandate one of its work-related affiliated organizations to monitor workplace conditions in developing and emerging nations where multinational organizations are controlling the production and global distribution of products. The United Nations needs only to publicize the names and products of the companies that do not meet ILO standards for decent work. Socially conscious investors and consumers are increasingly selective about doing business with companies whose products are made under proper working conditions. This social consciousness is growing internationally and we believe that publicity will be a major driving factor in improving working conditions. Additionally, this sort of publicity will provide local governments with an incentive and leverage to enforce local labour laws and the principles of decent work.

Research conducted by industrial and organizational psychologists has shown that decent work is a major factor in enabling individuals to climb out, and remain out of poverty. Furthermore, research by the World Bank shows that compliance with labour standards accompanies increased productivity and economic performance.