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Statement submitted by Salesian Missions, 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

Youth employment

Youth unemployment has consistently remained three times higher than adult unemployment for the past two decades. In some regions, it is now as high as five times the adult rate. The International Labour Organization has documented this sad reality and has alerted us to the fact that this situation risks creating a “lost generation” and is a threat to social cohesion. This became evident in 2011, when youth-led political and social movements surged throughout the world. While varied in nature and intensity, the unifying themes of the actions were jobs, freedom and social justice.

Youths in developing countries have been especially harder hit by the global economic crisis. It has become increasingly difficult to find decent work in the formal sector. Many young people are forced to accept jobs beneath their level of education and training. It has been noted that 75 million youths are currently unemployed and twice that number live in extreme poverty. This crisis situation threatens the principle of equality of opportunity across generations. Additionally, a decrease in the economic and employment prospects of youth could initiate economic stagnation or retrogression.

The Salesian Missions have addressed the problems faced by young people for over 150 years and have a special concern for training young people for the world of work. The Salesians work to enhance the employability of young people through vocational education that responds to labour market needs.

Improving or expanding efforts to prepare the emerging workforce involves the entire community, including families, educational institutions, businesses, industry and labour groups, government agencies, non-profit entities and young people themselves. When communities use all available resources collaboratively and intentionally, they ensure that young people have the skills needed to contribute to the economic and social well-being of families and the community at large.

The Salesians have demonstrated how this collaboration can be done and two good practices presented here are illustrative. In India, Don Bosco Tech is a network of 125 skills training centres of the organization spread across 25 states in the country, making it the largest non-governmental organization engaged in livelihood training in India. All of the centres provide employment-linked, market-oriented short-term vocational training to economically and socially marginalized youth. The goal of our Mission 2020 programme is to provide skills training and job placements for 2 million young people within 10 years.

In Italy, the Salesians partnered with private industry through national Salesian work centres. Firms such as Fiat, Schneider, Siemens and Bosch all signed agreements with the centres. Presently, nearly 25,000 young people take Salesian vocational training courses, mainly lasting three years, covering their period of compulsory education. Even more students would be served if economic constraints did not limit enrolment.

When all stakeholders work collaboratively, much is achieved and opportunities increase. We encourage all those participating in the development cooperation forum to work together to expand opportunities for youth.