



## Economic and Social Council

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Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

**High-level segment: annual ministerial review**

### **Statement submitted by Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, 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.

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\* E/2012/100.



## Statement

The essential ingredients required for poverty eradication are contained in the theme of the annual ministerial review: “Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals”. The Goals focus on poverty eradication and empowerment of 50 per cent of the population (women and girls) through the promotion of gender equality with access to education, health services, land rights and financial markets, in particular in rural areas. The challenge lies in how to implement the aspirational values of the United Nations and the Goals in an affluent, profit-driven and globalized world that focuses on production and consumption and perpetuates human rights violations by permitting gender inequality, extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition to continue. Alternative business models, redistribution of resources and fresh opportunities are necessary to develop productive capacities, employment and decent work.

Examples based on our organization’s work with women and girls in rural areas across the world support this analysis. At its session on agrochemicals, which recently took place in Bangalore, India, the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal indicated that agrochemical corporations had grown tremendously wealthy and powerful, profiting from the hazardous products and technologies that they had pushed into agriculture. The Tribunal advocated the upholding of human rights, especially of vulnerable populations, by calling upon national Governments not to ratify any new trade or investment agreements proposed without regard for human rights norms. Furthermore, it said that Governments should avoid granting immunity from criminal liability to agrochemical companies under national law and prevent direct or indirect harassment and intimidation of scientists, farmers and human rights and environmental defenders. These recommendations are applicable in many other instances in the corporate world.

Best practices within our organization bear witness to the transformation that takes place when women and girls realize their dignity and access their human rights and justice at the individual and community levels. In 2011, as part of a community development programme in Paraguay, 180 agroecological gardens were developed based on a partnership model, which in turn led to the redistribution of community assets (such as water), the development of management skills, improved equitable distribution of household tasks, the production of healthy food, the development of food-processing techniques and economic improvements. A project on promoting the socio-economic development of marginalized women in Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Madhya Pradesh, India, successfully uses a rights-based approach, illustrating that local ownership, participation and sharing in decisions are essential to eradicating poverty. However, such developments are vulnerable to destruction and impoverishment when not accompanied by structural and systemic change that supports these principles.

The Social Protection Floor Initiative proposed by the United Nations puts forward a coherent policy tailored to national circumstances that ensures access to services and a minimum income for every person living in poverty, while guaranteeing a human rights approach. Implementation of the Initiative by 2020 will facilitate the development of productive capacity and make for inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth.