



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and  
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:  
priority theme: promoting empowerment of people in  
achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full  
employment and decent work for all**

### **Statement submitted by SustainUS, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



## Statement

Despite current efforts by Member States and international organizations, extreme poverty and inequality remain pressing global challenges. According to recent estimates by the World Bank, in 2010 1 billion people were living below the poverty line (\$1.25/day). In addition, rising unemployment rates mean that millions of children go to bed hungry every night. Moreover, young people are not able to lift themselves out of poverty because their skill set often does not match those that are being demanded by global markets, or because there are no jobs. To further complicate the situation, radical changes in the geopolitical world have amplified the challenge of providing water, food and basic services to a growing population, particularly in developing countries, where children and youth are the most affected by precarious living conditions.

There is a need to promote the creation of productive employment and decent work, participatory governance systems and sustainable development. Cross-sectoral policies to increase investment in agriculture, rural development and climate adaptation and mitigation are also necessary to improve food security and reduce poverty.

Experts have also noted that we should not only address extreme poverty, but also the social vulnerability and inequality arising from globalization. Borders are not the only factors affecting citizens' well-being, the movement of capital, goods, technology and knowledge often challenges the ability of households to satisfy basic needs.

Without basic social transfer schemes to foster education, health care and adequate nutrition, citizens cannot be productive. Member States should strive to promote participatory models when developing policies to tackle social challenges. Intergenerational equity and participation for all, with special attention to the inclusion of youth and children, are the building blocks of a sustainable future.

Although we understand the magnitude of these challenges and the complexities associated with implementing programmes to tackle them, we urge Member States to focus on policies that promote the following goals:

- Inclusive growth for a dignified livelihood and an adequate standard of living, considering, particularly, the welfare of children as a metric for progress;
- Reduction of unemployment among youth through the creation of green job opportunities, including: the launch of locally appropriate job-training and education in the context of sustainable development; the expansion of start-up funding to young entrepreneurs; and the development of social protection floors for those who have been negatively impacted by the recent economic crisis;
- Sufficient food and water for all citizens in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, including growing concerns about water scarcity and food price volatility, and the need for adequate nutrition, not simply caloric intake;
- Good health, providing the best possible levels of physical, mental and social well-being: Governments and regional organizations must not only address infectious diseases but also the growing burden posed by non-communicable

diseases; in addition, health-care systems must be strengthened worldwide to address disease intervention;

- Human security to ensure freedom from violence, particularly that related to lack of freedom of speech and religion and gender-based violence: Member States and policymakers should develop tools to close the existing gap between human insecurity and development by promoting compliance with human rights agreements and engaging fragile States;
- Gender equality enabling men and women in society to participate and benefit equally in society. Women are central for economic development and lifting families from poverty: Member States should advance the physical, economic and decision-making autonomy of women across societies, including decisions about sexual and reproductive rights;
- Access to information and open government policies to engage stakeholders in the development of policies to address poverty: citizens should be able to exercise their civil and political rights and hold their Governments accountable;
- Sustainable management of natural resources: building on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Member States should integrate the environmental perspective into existing economic, social and human rights programmes. While the goals of economic and social development and environmental sustainability can be in conflict, there is a need for them to co-exist in a new economic system to secure a sustainable future;
- Sustainable development goals that reflect emerging challenges for social development and seek to close existing gaps in terms of civil society participation, economic inequity and human welfare;
- Global governance that responds to emerging challenges. Recent humanitarian crises in the Syrian Arab Republic and Libya, as well as the failure of Member States to develop comprehensive agreements during the negotiations of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have called attention to the ineffectiveness of international institutions: States should focus on addressing specific shortcomings in the global economy that represent enormous barriers to development and on promoting the integration of existing institutions for the efficient use of economic resources.

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