



## 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 Centre Africain de Recherche Industrielle (CARI), 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 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



## Statement

Poverty in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be blamed on the fact that the gathering economy, which constitutes the livelihood of 75 per cent of the population, is not yet an issue in the eyes of its leaders, let alone development partners such as the African Development Bank, the European Union, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The gathering economy consists of trade in wild foods such as edible insects, wild fruits and vegetables, caterpillars, mushrooms, fish and game, which are subject to the harmful effects of climate change.

The Government and its external partners draw up development plans that are sophisticated when it comes to national accounting but completely overlook the gathering economy or anything related to the informal sector. Those plans take no account of the population; hence, the persistence of poverty in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular, and in other African countries where the genuine needs of the population are ignored across the board by their leaders

With a view to eradicating poverty in our countries, it is high time to institute a social dialogue that includes all segments of the population in a policymaking process that affects their lives. They can thus be assured that their well-being has been conceived with them in mind – and not their leaders and development partners.

From now on, grass-roots participation in the management of local affairs will have to be regarded as a component of results-oriented development management.

This presupposes a coordinating framework to promote a civic dialogue in which leaders will prove their accountability to the people and foster civic engagement as they endeavour to realize the people's aspirations. This will lead to:

- the institution of citizen participation;
- the scrutiny of current working methods;
- the introduction of development policies that are more realistic and more closely attuned to the people's aspirations.

Thus, in the development process, there will not be actors (leaders) on one side and spectators (idle citizens) on the other. Everyone will be an actor - the mark of full employment in the country and the end of the reign of poverty.