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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: strategies
for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable
development for all**

Statement submitted by the Young Heart Foundation, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

STRATEGIES FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL: THE CASE OF GHANA

Poverty exists in many forms. It is not exclusively to far away from countries, cities or communities - it is omnipresent. It exists in our own communities, our own cities, our own countries. Inequality, both between and within countries is higher than ever before. Yet, we often refuse to recognise the links between our own behaviour and the dire circumstances in which many people are forced to live.

Objectives of the Statement:

The main thrust of this statement is to:

- Assess Ghana's causative factors and effect of poverty and propose strategies to eradicate poverty which is the overarching objective of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and all countries are obligated to end in all forms, through strategies that guarantee the fulfilment of all human rights and ensure that no one is left behind;
- Present the YHF's contributions, challenges and way forward in its quest of assisting in ending poverty in Ghana.

Purpose of the Statement

Poverty has always been a part of the world, even in the developed world where it is assumed that everyone is well to do; some of the people find themselves living on the streets because of poverty. The under-developed countries, which find themselves in all kinds of economic crisis, have nothing to write home about on the issue of poverty, as many people live on less than one dollar a day. The vision of ending poverty worldwide by the year 2015 by the Millennium Development Goal (MDG), seems to be a mirage, as the year had passed but poverty still has great grip on many countries in the world. From the look of things, the vision of the MDG has a long way to go, as the economy of the world, day in day out, falls into crisis due to one reason or the other. The MDG's report indicates that the number of people living in poverty globally in 2009 is expected to be 55 million to 90 million higher than predicted before the global economic crisis.

Ghana was one of the few sub-Saharan Africa countries to meet the MDG 1 target of halving extreme poverty. The proportion of its population living below the poverty line of US\$1.25 a day declined from 51.7% to 28.5% between 1991 and 2006, and the poverty level was estimated to be 24% in 2012/13. There remain, however, significant disparities in poverty levels between social groups, between urban and rural areas, and between the northern and southern regions, while rising income inequality has the potential to undermine gains in poverty reduction. Ghana is also susceptible to environmental, social, financial and health-related shocks that could hinder growth, reduce food security and increase poverty.

The pursuit of inclusive growth strategies, social protection policies, and initiatives specifically targeting the extremely poor and vulnerable, including the creation of decent jobs, will sustain progress towards ending poverty, hunger and malnutrition. At the same time, implementing SDGs 1 ("End poverty in all its forms everywhere") and 2 ("End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture") presents additional policy challenges and opportunities.

Overview of Issues related to YHF Work:

Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

As recalled by the foreword of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, 189 countries unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration, pledging to “spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty.”

This commitment was translated into an inspiring framework of eight goals and then into wide-ranging practical steps that have enabled people across the world to improve their lives and their future prospects. The Youth Heart Foundation in helping to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, to make inroads against hunger, to enable more girls to attend school than ever before and to protect our planet as a success chalked by Millennium Development Goals, set out our Missions to help create a better world especially for the vulnerable and those facing poverty, through empowerment rooted in love, Equality, Justice and Dignity.

Examples of Accomplishments of YHF and Challenges

- Establishment of Child Birth Centre at Madina Polyclinic (Rawlings Circle) in 2012 which helped reduce drastically the number of birth related diseases and deaths;
- The Pregnancy School seeks to educate and synthesize pregnant women;
- The Organisation regularly runs free health screening programs to the general public to help create awareness on communicable and non- communicable diseases on 23rd June which is International widows Day;
- “Push Away Malaria Project” which is an awareness and capacity building program that seeks to promote malaria prevention and treatment and why the need for pregnant women and children under five years to sleep under Long Lasting Insecticides Net (LLIN);
- We have in collaboration with Breast Care International organized a Breast Cancer Education Program. Self-examining kits were given to participants;
- In collaboration with U.S.A for Africa and Sight for Africa, the organization organizes annual eye screening and education clinics in various locations. Eye glasses and medication are given to some participants.
- Small business Development Program and Capacity building (SBDP) for those in the informal sector on good business practices, ways to improve their businesses;
- The organization has formed 420 widows associations at Agona-Nkum in the Central Region, and Madina in the Greater Accra Region has supported members of the association in so many ways such as: the provision of farm implements, providing capital for small businesses start-up etc. The organisation has adopted about 11 children who we sponsor in education.
- Under the skill development program, we put young girls and boys in various vocational training programs, to develop and also have some learn new skills;
- The organization has provided a very big overhead water reservoir and the construction of a mechanized borehole for the people of Madina and its surroundings.

- Support to the Local Police Service and The Social Welfare Department
- In partnership with Open Society Initiative for West Africa (O.S.I.W.A) Young Heart Foundation implemented a project to promote the rights of the above groups, Domestic violence and Gender related issues;
- Formation of Child Rights Clubs;
- Organization of a Climate Stimulation training program for some selected journalist and the public to equip participants on climate related issues;
- We are currently executing the People for Health, funded by USAID being implemented by SEND GHAN, Penplusbytes and Ghana News Agency (GNA) spanning 5years (2016-2021).

Way Forward:

To address the challenges, it requires the development and implementation of long-term development strategies with harmoniously integrated pillars of sustainable development and that calls for building human and institutional capacities for policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and for the enforcement of legislation.

Effective grass root participation, including the private sector and civil society organisations at the design and implementation stages, as well as the need to strengthen decentralised government administration and political processes; sensitise and create awareness at the local level, promote sustainability practices and foster partnerships among policy makers and the people.

Ghana must also improve significantly internal resource mobilisation through market-based policies such as taxes, subsidies, incentives; encourage the polluter pay principle in natural resources management and above all ensure efficient and effective management of resources to avoid waste. This will serve as a signal for donor commitment to pledges.

“Above all, there is the need for the country to begin a serious transformation of the economy through the modernisation of agriculture and the addition of value to our natural resources with the view to expanding the manufacturing sector. This is the surest way of creating significant employment, generating income and eradicating poverty.

In conclusion, the campaign of the MDG to help end poverty has been long overdue, as it has been advertised almost all over the country, to create awareness about the fast widespread of poverty in Ghana and the world, and the need to stand firm to prevent it.

It is now the turn of the government to show concrete evidence of trying to end poverty, and avoid the daily theory to end poverty which never comes to reality. If the government would start the elimination of poverty at the district level effectively, its impact will be beneficial to the nation as a whole.