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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 Salesian Missions, Inc., 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

Youth Employment: essential for a sustainable society and future

The Salesians of Don Bosco are committed to the integral development of youth, especially those most vulnerable and living in poverty. We are heartened by the theme of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development, Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all and focus our contribution to the Commission on the role of youth in achieving sustainable development. We believe that the inclusion of young people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs to achieve sustainable development and to eradicate poverty is essential. The Member States strongly acknowledged the importance of youth participation and involvement in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Implementing and achieving SDG 8 is a powerful means to ensure that no one is left behind, and is key to eradicating poverty. The specific inclusion of youth employment in SDG Target 8.6, as well as the youth dimensions of Targets 8.5 and 8.7 and the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization are of special concern for us.

The present situation

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has tracked Global Employment Trends for Youth and has consistently shown that youth remain overrepresented among the unemployed and underemployed. The research shows that forty per cent of working age youths is either unemployed or working jobs for wages that kept them in poverty. The ILO has also noted that the global youth unemployment rate is on the rise after a number of years of improvement. This means that after falling by about 3 million between 2012 and 2015, the number of unemployed youth globally rose by half a million in 2016 bringing the total to 71 million. It is expected to remain at this level for all of 2017.

Societal failure to address the vulnerabilities of youth in the labour market and the lack of jobs for youth has the potential to have significant negative effects on health, emotional well-being, happiness, crime levels and socio-political stability. The UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism acknowledged the direct linkage of youth unemployment and violent extremism noting, "the absence of alternative employment opportunities can make violent extremist organizations an attractive source of income."

While education is an important part of preparing youth for the world of work, it is no guarantee that the young will find a job. The average amount of time for a young person to find decent work after leaving school is approximately 20 months. This delay carries the risk of skills deterioration, underemployment and discouragement. The importance of transitioning from childhood to adulthood with decent work should not be underestimated. In fact, it is imperative to a young person's well-being and future societal stability and development. Highly qualified youths, when faced with the prospect of unemployment, working poverty and/or vulnerable forms of employment have increasingly sought to migrate to other countries with better employment opportunities.

Special attention must be given to gender disparity in youth unemployment and underemployment. Deep-rooted socio-economic and cultural challenges tend to disproportionately disadvantage young women and girls seeking decent work. In some instances their inclusion in the work force has been downplayed. In other

instances, it has made them vulnerable to exploitation by human traffickers and to other forms of exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

Salesians respond to the need for preparing youth for employment

The Salesians of Don Bosco are committed to the empowerment of youth in over 130 countries. Through education and training for employment, motivated by faith and guided by the social teaching of the Church, the Salesians have been forming workers and good citizens for over 150 years.

Among the many professional training centers the following are illustrative of the work the Salesians do for and with young men and women:

- Job mediation centers in El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. In San Salvador, Salesians have offered free education and job training to children and young adults from marginalized communities at risk of falling into the world of crime for thirty years. Additionally, young men serving prison terms who have shown good behavior in prison have been sent by judges to the Center to complete their sentences and learn a trade. Graduates have created small businesses in agriculture and industry. Recently three universities have agreed to collaborate with the Salesians in offering a university-level course to form young entrepreneurs to help them nurture their companies effectively manage them after graduation.
- Universidad Don Bosco (UDB) of El Salvador is the only institution offering a program in Biomedical Engineering trainings professionals in the design, analysis and management of the different technologies and systems leading to improvement medical applications. Another program in Aeronautical Maintenance has an agreement of cooperation with Broward College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
- In Italy, through their organization Salesiani per il Sociale – Federazione SCS/CNOS, Salesians work to educate young people living in poverty in art, seeing art as an instrument of development for children, teenagers and young people.
- In Buenaventura, Colombia—a city of 300,000 where drug trafficking has led to the nation’s highest murder rate—Salesians train 900 youths in woodworking, welding, and other practical skills.
- In Quetta, a Pakistani city of 900,000 on the Afghan border, Salesians care for more than 3,400 children daily, providing housing, education, and food. Some are refugees from Afghanistan.
- The Salesian parish in Kakuma, Kenya includes 60,000 Sudanese refugees, and Salesians there provide vocational training to 300 refugee boys and girls.
- Salesians in Goma in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have cared for 35,000 children affected by war since 1997. They educate and feed nearly 3,000 school age children, and house 50 orphans under age three.
- In the rural Andean town of Simiatug, Ecuador, Salesians teach indigenous populations computer technology so they can market their agricultural and other goods online.
- In Mozambique there are five Salesian Centers for Vocational Training, and the Don Bosco Higher Institute of Maputo, provides university education for future teachers of Vocational Training throughout the country.
- In Port-au-Prince, the first vocational training school for bakers in Haiti opened on Monday, October 9, 2017.

- In collaboration with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and CNH Industrial, the “TechPro2” has formed almost 13,000 young people in over 380,000 hours of lessons and facilitated more than 5,000 internships since 2008. Begun in Italy, it now has 50 schools in 11 countries. Graduates in India and Ethiopia have all found employment.
- Salesians have additional Business Partnerships with, inter alia, Siemens (India) and FIAT (Argentina); Porsche (South Africa, Philippines), BMW (Thailand).

Recommendations

Since youth are explicitly noted as a key target group for “achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all”, the challenges of youth employment, for males and females, must be addressed when formulating local and international development priorities and strategies. Governments, the private sector and civil society must collaborate in achieving SDG Targets 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7. We recommend the following actions for all stakeholders:

- Commit to the full implementation of the ILO Decent Work Agenda with a special emphasis on addressing youth unemployment.
- Commit to enhancing work opportunities locally so youths can remain at home and not have to seek employment in other countries.
- Provide more skills training and preparation for the world of work for youths and forming partnerships with private sector industries to provide jobs for trained youths.
- Ensure that youths be paid a living wage to lift them out of poverty and prevent them from working involuntarily in informal, part-time or temporary jobs.
- Commit to the tenets of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization to help shape national strategies for youth employment, ensure decent work for youth, address poverty and inequality and strengthen youth capacities to achieve a more equitable and prosperous future.