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Statement submitted by Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro – General Italian Confederation of Labour, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Empowering people, ensuring inclusiveness and equality and implementing SDGs through the Italian experience of the so called “social negotiation” at the local level

Existing social and economic inequalities represent some of the major obstacles to democracy and social justice and to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

After more than ten years of crisis, workers suffer in the most acute way from those inequalities worldwide, especially due to the lack of quality jobs opportunities and decent work, adequate revenues and levels of social protection, in addition to the pervasive impacts of climate change and digital/technological revolution. Geographical, social, generational and gender inequalities have increased and still do, affecting the democratic systems.

Especially at local level, community and solidarity ties are put at risk while the segregation and marginalisation of vulnerable people are increasing. At the opposite, strengthening social ties would be needed now more than ever in order to foster local development, advantaging social cohesion and economic growth.

The Italian experience shows that collective negotiation, together with the social and territorial one, represent powerful tools to fight against inequalities.

The social negotiation between Italian workers’ trade unions CGIL CISL UIL and public institutions (Regions, municipalities and local Governments) takes place at territorial level and especially deals with social fragilities and marginalities. Trade unions, which in Italy represent general interests and not only those of their members, are legitimate actors for negotiation “erga omnes” and can ensure an overall “system” vision aimed at a vigorous rebound of the concerned territory.

This vision finds concrete expression in a “platform” of specific demands related to the objective of the given negotiation.

Concrete examples concern citizens’ local taxation, tariffs, transports etc. Those negotiations are based on the existing relationship between trade unions and public actors, the economic situation, local budgetary constraints, institutional organisation and the internal coherence of the participatory processes and their forms.

These processes of so-called “contrattazione sociale”, e.g. negotiation on social issues at local level, imply relations with local sectors and specific organisations (such as associations, citizens, political representative bodies, employers etc.). These methodological aspects are needed to obtain citizens’ consensus, solicitate people participation and public and private operators’ involvement.

Good democratic rules work as precondition for the effectiveness and legitimacy of this type of negotiation: assemblies in the workplace, in public or private associations or in public spaces and needs’ assessment amongst the users through questionnaires and surveys are welcome and guarantee the transparency of the stakeholders’ mandate. NGOs participate and contribute to this negotiation.

CGIL considers this “contrattazione sociale” as a successful experience when a) the platform is the result of a positive consultation with the concerned local population and institutions, b) its enforceability can be monitored and c) the needed financial coverage requirements are clearly provided.

These local experiences represent concrete steps towards the implementation of SDGs, especially goals 1,3,4,5,7,8,9,10, 11,13,16 and 17 as they consider and highlight the idea of the overall local development in social, economic, cultural and environmental terms.