



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
23 November 2009

Original: English

Commission for Social Development

Forty-eighth session

3-12 February 2010

Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: social integration**

Statement by the International Federation of Social Workers, a non-governmental organization in General 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.

* E/CN.5/2010/1.



Statement

1. International Federation of Social Workers supports the theme of the forty-eighth meeting of the Commission for Social Development, “Promoting social integration”, with special attention to social groups such as disabled persons, youth, ageing and the family. The Federation is a global organization representing over 750,000 social workers in 87 countries around the world. Our mission is to strive and advocate for social justice, human rights and social development through the practice of social work (www.ifsw.org).

2. Social integration as a concept speaks to all members of society having full access to opportunities, rights and services. Social cohesion should encompass all realms of society including cultural, social, political, economic and spiritual opportunities. Social integration should not imply the imposition of uniformity, but a respect for diversity, protection of human rights for all and equality of opportunity.

3. We support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which promotes equal rights and opportunities for all individuals regardless of their membership in specific social groups. We are also committed to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, which are very much related to social work’s promotion of human rights and social justice for all people. Certain social groups are at particular risk for extreme poverty (Millennium Development Goal 1) and educational deprivation (Millennium Development Goal 2). Special attention needs to be paid to those who are doubly vulnerable: women, migrants and indigenous peoples who are disabled, older or between the ages of 15 and 24 (youth). The Federation has policies on women, migrants, indigenous peoples, youth and older people that specifically relate to the needs and rights of these populations. The policy on women stresses the importance of equal educational opportunities for women. The Federation recommends that services for youth should be developed that strengthen relationships with families. The policy on ageing and older persons specifically states as a goal the “Promotion of full societal integration of older adults, including people with physical, psychological and cognitive disabilities, illnesses, and diseases, as well as intra- and international migrants — through lifelong learning, political participation, intergenerational relationships, cultural, social, and voluntary activities, and paid employment” (<http://www.ifsw.org/p38000214.html>).

4. We recommend the following:

- The Commission on Social Development should promote social integration by encouraging Governments and non-governmental organizations that foster participation and integration of women, disabled people, youth, older people, migrants and indigenous peoples into all levels of society.
- Funding needs to be committed for policies that support social integration of these groups to promote a more just and equitable society. These policies need to be all encompassing and should include housing, education, employment and social service programmes and policies.
- Decision-making on social integration approaches needs to be conducted in a participatory approach, which includes the voices of all groups and members of society. Women, disabled people, youth, older people, migrants and indigenous peoples should participate in decision-making about programmes and policies that affect them.

- Social workers all over the world are involved in providing services to women, disabled people, youth, older people, migrants and indigenous peoples. We believe that national and international policies must be directed towards developing social and economic programmes to help these groups. The Federation considers the following types of social development programmes to be of particular importance:
 - Education and lifelong learning programmes. Too often older people, youth, and disabled people lack educational access. Programmes that increase access and work towards providing educational opportunities need to be supported.
 - Educational and employment programmes that provide support for those whose physical, mental or emotional problems or caring responsibilities prevent them from maximizing opportunities.
 - Economic and social protection both for those who are able and those unable to pursue educational and employment opportunities.
 - Programmes that promote job training and literacy should be supported.
 - Educational programmes that strive to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of securing an eighth grade education for all people, but especially those who are frequently marginalized — disabled, older people, and youth.
 - Consultation with local communities and civil society organizations and the active involvement of “excluded” individuals and communities in decisions which affect them.
 - Programmes that specifically serve to focus on the physical and mental health needs of women, migrants, disabled people and youth need to be developed and supported by national and international groups.
 - Community education initiatives that advocate for human rights and strive to inform all persons of their basic human rights and the inherent dignity and worth of every individual.
 - Community-building initiatives that promote the involvement of social groups in advancing their own well-being.