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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 Jeunesse horizon, 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

Once well on the path to development, today a poor, heavily indebted country, Cameroon, like many other countries, has great potential wealth in terms of its human, natural and mineral resources, among many others. The origins of the disparity between the natural potential of these countries and the reality on the ground may be found in the mindset of some of their leaders, in the lack of political will, the denial of human rights and human dignity, corruption and bad governance. All these scourges and afflictions significantly hamper progress towards poverty eradication, social integration and the provision of full employment and decent jobs for all.

The objective of eradicating, or at the very least, reducing poverty by 2015 — the main thrust of the Millennium Development Goals — offers a new vision for underdeveloped countries such as ours, a new direction, a new social framework for integrating the disadvantaged and young people. Now more than ever, youth must be at the centre of development, social integration and employment policies.

Job insecurity is affecting all; no sector has been spared. A country's economic situation tends to influence business management practices. Take, for example, the programme to employ 25,000 young people, launched by the President of the Republic of Cameroon in February 2011. Applications were submitted not only by unemployed youth, but also by young people who had better paying jobs in the private sector. This situation demonstrates that job stability is an issue in the private sector in Cameroon and many other African countries.

Of the 13 million people in the work force, fewer than 1 million have stable employment; the rest work in the informal sector, without any support or guarantee of social security benefits. Despite all the unemployment reduction initiatives and strategies implemented by various Governments, employment generally, and youth employment specifically, remains one of the most critical development issues facing developing countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa. No country can achieve development without a developed, healthy and robust youth population which not only participates in that country's governing structures but also contributes to its growth. There cannot be full employment and decent jobs in a country so long as its youth are excluded, forgotten and left to their own devices.

In order to achieve full employment, first, those sectors that can make an impact and be accepted in the community of nations must be identified; such sectors include agriculture, livestock and crafts, among many other sectors which foster development and can shape the specific training available to youth and later provide them with employment.

Leaders, followed by civil society, must promote another form of development in their respective fields and make youth understand that the welfare State no longer exists. Developing, organizing and supporting the private sector as a means of achieving full employment must be a primary goal of policymakers. The State needs the support of additional partners to achieve this task.

Social integration cannot become a reality until individuals and groups have access to the material and cultural resources that guarantee their participation in social life. For example, today, a decent livelihood is a prerequisite for social acceptance. A certain level of culture and patriotic spirit is needed to fully exercise

the role of citizen; this was the reason behind the establishment of the Cameroonian National Civic Service Agency for Participation in Development. Social integration precludes marginalization, social exclusion as well as stigma and discrimination. Social integration is therefore not possible without a basic level of equality.

In the face of the difficulties outlined above, the strategy for promoting full employment and decent work for all, with a view to reducing poverty and discrimination, should be, first and foremost, to bring about a comprehensive change in the attitudes and mindset of all parties, strengthen the rule of law and democratic processes, and provide free education.

The following are a few strategies that could be implemented in order to achieve these objectives:

- Educate people in order to change attitudes; promote literacy and provide both formal and informal education
- Promote a macroeconomic framework designed to ensure the efficient and strict management of public finances
- Distribute equitably the benefits of growth and provide access to basic social services such as food, education and health care
- Encourage diversification of the economy in accordance with the potential of each region
- Expand the private sector and facilitate the vocational development of teachers (Cameroon's education system is characterized by a wide mismatch between training and jobs; 65 per cent of job-seekers are graduates yet lack appropriate skills)
- Develop basic infrastructure (roads, highways, dams, gas power plant, etc.)
- Strengthen institutional capacity: functioning democratic institutions are key to sustainable development; foster good governance, which includes the fight against corruption
- Strengthen democracy and good governance, which can only be achieved through:

Decentralization

- Further empowerment of the people
- Transfer of skills and human, technical and financial resources to communities at the grass-roots level
- Improvement in social equity and social solidarity
- Fighting corruption
- Promote the mainstreaming by our Governments of the right to development as a human right
- Stem rural flight, emphasizing programmes for comprehensive development

The primary task undertaken by our Governments and political leaders, civil society, the private sector and young people should be to promote people's empowerment so as to help them climb out of poverty and achieve social

integration, full employment and decent jobs It is our hope that, by creating the National Civic Service Agency for Participation in Development in Cameroon, policymakers have taken stock of the situation and wish to encourage youth from all walks of life to cultivate a love for the nation and respect for the flag, all of which should motivate a real change in attitudes and political vision.
