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Social and human rights questions: social development

Statement submitted by International Federation of Social Workers, 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.

* E/2012/100.



Statement

We, the largest international social work and social development organizations in the world, are responsible for the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development Commitment to Action. As social workers, educators and social development practitioners, we witness the daily realities of people living in poverty and the multiple systems that alleviate hunger, ill health and exploitation. We therefore make the following statement to the Member States that are responding to these people living in poverty and to the Member States that benefit from the exploitation of impoverished countries.

People cannot be developed and managed by others. Our front-line experience has taught us that, to escape from poverty, people need to be actively involved in their own futures. They need to be able to contribute to best-practice ideas and, as leaders, they need to be able to form collaborative engagements with funding bodies, managers of resources and other systems for support.

Basic minimum levels of social protection are required. As global bodies representing international social work and social development, we know that poverty is worst where there are no social protection systems covering people's lifespans. We support the United Nations call for a minimum social protection floor to be built in every country.

Poverty eradication is a systemic responsibility. As social workers and social development practitioners, we understand that in many instances poverty is sustained through exploitative systems. We advocate trade systems based on human rights, fair pricing, international labour standards, corporate social responsibility, capacity-building and agreed forms of dialogue underpinning supply and demand agreements that enable all parties to participate and share benefits.

We, as front-line workers, social work educators and members of affected communities, commit ourselves to assisting in making links among people living in poverty, national Governments, regional authorities and international frameworks. We welcome working with Member States and United Nations agencies to fulfil the vision of eradicating poverty and fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals.

Recommendations

We urge Member States:

- To work alongside people in poverty to find solutions.
- To build universal minimum social protection systems that support the health and well-being of the general population.
- If benefiting from trade with impoverished nations, to set legislation in place that is based on social justice and human rights principles.