



## **Economic and Social Council**

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### **Commission for Social Development**

#### **Fifty-first session**

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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 Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants, 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

The final draft of the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights, submitted by the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona (A/HRC/21/39), wisely defines extreme poverty as “the combination of income poverty, human development poverty, and social exclusion”. Concentrations of those living in extreme poverty are very high in the world’s slums and in many prisons. Prisoners are, for the most part, persons who had been living in poverty, with poor education and little or no job training. They suffer from higher than average levels of addictions to alcohol or drugs, learning disabilities, mental illness or diseases like AIDS or tuberculosis.

For over 40 years, Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants has worked for the transformation of justice and prison systems from primarily retribution systems to primarily restoration, rehabilitation and reintegration systems. In short, it has worked to establish restorative justice. The organization’s platform, including its 48 ways forward and five-year goals, can be found on its website.

We recommend a shift in the economic paradigm, including (a) investments in areas where there are concentrations of deficiencies, as in slums and prisons; (b) the promotion of recovery, rehabilitation and productive re-entry into society; (c) a reduction of excessive economic drains on society from purely punishment systems; and (d) horizontal and vertical economic growth, rather than overreliance on the trickle-down effect. National objectives should therefore include better social health, more national productivity, less unrest and crime and lower total costs for police, the judiciary, jails, prisons, welfare and other after-effects of unrest and crime.

More broadly, what does civil society want? We call the attention of the Council to the June 2012 report of the United Nations System Task Team on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda, entitled “Realizing the Future We Want for All”. That excellent report presents four core dimensions where progress will be needed to build a rights-based, equitable, secure and sustainable world for all people. These four dimensions are: (a) inclusive social development; (b) inclusive economic development; (c) peace and security; and (d) environmental sustainability. We note that the first three of these dimensions apply particularly to the extremely poor in the world’s slums and prisons.

The “wants” in these three dimensions of the United Nations System Task Team are remarkably compatible with the restorative justice goals of the organization. To illustrate, we cite below, for the first three dimensions, some key statements of needs by the United Nations System Task Team and corresponding restorative justice goals of the organization.

### 1. “Wants” concerning inclusive social development

These include women’s empowerment and gender equality; adequate nutrition for all; quality education for all; universal access to quality health care, clean water and sanitation; and inclusive social protection systems.

The relevant goals of the organization for gender justice and equality are to (a) increase awareness of human trafficking and the enforcement of laws against it; (b) broaden laws against domestic violence and enforce them; (c) ensure that the confinement of children in prison is a last resort and that juveniles in conflict with

the law are treated as children, not as adults; (d) establish and enforce standards for humane treatment of women in prisons; (e) upgrade laws and customs giving equal rights to women in subjects like inheritance and ownership of land and property.

#### **Relevant goals of the organization for social protection**

The organization strongly supports the social protection floor plan, advanced in the United Nations by the International Labour Organization, for the universal provision of minimum standards of health, education, nutrition, clean water and sanitation.

### **2. “Wants” concerning inclusive economic development**

These include eradicating income poverty and hunger; reducing inequalities; ensuring decent work and productive employment; and affordable access to technology and knowledge.

#### **Relevant goals of the organization for economic development**

These are to (a) make decent work and rehabilitation and re-entry into society the prime purposes of correctional facilities; (b) provide at least primary education in all prisons; (c) provide job training programmes in prisons that develop marketable job skills; (d) include training in microfinance, small business management and small farm management; and (e) where possible, include apprenticeship and intern programmes.

### **3. “Wants” concerning peace and security**

These include freedom from violence, conflict and abuse; good governance practice based on the rule of law; and conflict prevention and mediation.

The relevant goals of the organization for peace and security are to: (a) increase the use of alternatives to prison, such as community service, mediation and family group counselling; (b) protect defendants’ rights and improvement of defendants’ legal counsel; (c) guard against coerced confessions; (d) provide quality treatment instead of incarceration for offences relating to alcohol or drug addiction; (e) increase training in conflict resolution, understanding the needs of others, seeking common ground and finding win-win solutions; (f) eliminate unnecessary pretrial detention and the setting of a maximum allowable time of pretrial detention; and (g) enforce prison occupancy limits that approach design capacities.

There is therefore a great synergy between the elements that would enable the realization of “the Future We Want for All”, and the elements that would enable restorative justice, as expressed as goals of the organization.

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*Note:* The statement is endorsed by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council: Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and UNANIMA International.