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Statement submitted by the Salvation Army, 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 Salvation Army is an international movement and an evangelical branch of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in his name without discrimination.

The Salvation Army has been working on the Millennium Development Goals long before they were even called the Millennium Development Goals. The Salvation Army continues to fight the injustices surrounding the Goals and will continue to work at eradicating them where possible.

The Salvation Army has worked for over 145 years to meet the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls and has made improvements in the lives of women and girls globally through our character- and faith-based programmes.

We recognize that the Millennium Development Goals will not end in 2015, and we have made an attempt to do something to eradicate the issues that plague those who have been left behind by society. There must be a large-scale social and economic transformation in order to make significant progress in these goals.

We would like to highlight some areas of achievement and challenges that our organization has faced in working to eliminate some of the issues behind the Millennium Development Goals from a faith-based perspective.

Poverty and hunger

Poverty and hunger continue to plague our society, but we believe that we have made a difference in the lives of people around the world by helping them to move out of poverty. Traditional programmes have not really addressed the root causes of poverty and hunger, and without real economic change the poor will continue to remain poor and marginalized.

Because the Salvation Army is an international organization, we have worked with poverty and hunger issues in different situations around the world. In the Czech Republic we are very active in the Anti-Poverty Campaign, raising public awareness of the problems connected with the goal of eliminating poverty. We provide various services for women ranging from accommodations and support groups, using a holistic approach that cares for the total person.

We have feeding programmes around the world to help eliminate hunger, but we also offer rehabilitation programmes to help move people out of poverty and encourage them to be self-supporting and self-sufficient.

In another part of the world, the Salvation Army has made an attempt to eliminate poverty by starting small business training on budget and management and a SMART programme (simple, measurable, achievable, with realistic timing). The course is conducted in a community and reaches out to both women and girls; it is also offered to women in prison and women on parole.

In this regard, the Salvation Army recommends that Governments:

- Recognize that faith-based organizations can provide sustainable relief and support if asked to be part of the networking process
- Recognize that the problems of hunger and food insecurity have global dimensions and that they are likely to persist, and even to increase dramatically, in some regions unless urgent, determined and concerted action is taken
- Recognize that there has to be an end to the greed of the few who own and to the unequal distribution of the resources, which affects women more than men; greater efforts should be made to ensure that there is an equal distribution of resources that would lead to common ownership and equality
- Reach out to faith-based organizations and partner with them in anti-poverty programmes; ensure that funding given to countries is monitored to hold them accountable for ensuring that funds for eradicating poverty reach the community level

Access to quality education and the empowerment of women

The Salvation Army has over 2,500 schools around the world which women, men, boys and girls can attend. Many of the schools are located in low-income areas where the marginalized, most poverty-stricken persons live so that everyone in that community or village has an opportunity to obtain at least a primary education.

In some parts of the world, travelling schoolteachers, called literacy workers, go to where the children are located and conduct literary classes for girls and for women who are in settlements and in prison.

The faith-based community has opened up doors and opportunities for women to receive leadership training, advice on behaviour change and ownership training so that they can have a chance to make a difference in the lives of their families and their communities.

The Salvation Army is working towards the empowerment of rural women who have viable and feasible ideas for establishing business activities but lack capital investment to obtain business literacy skills and education.

The Salvation Army has always fought for the empowerment and equality of women. We conduct seminars, classes and character-building programmes for the empowerment of women and girls. We work to promote equal rights for women and girls and seek ways for women and girls to use their leadership skills and abilities so that they can take the lead in their homes, communities and even in their countries.

In this regard, the Salvation Army recommends that Governments remove economic barriers to women's educational opportunities and promote an equitable sharing of authority and responsibilities in family life, work and society, as well as equal access to economic and political power.

The Salvation Army has been pursuing the ideals of the Millennium Development Goals and we will continue to pursue a just development system long after 2015. The Salvation Army encourages Member States to continue to work towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.