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### Commission for Social Development

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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: rethinking and strengthening social  
development in the contemporary world**

### **Statement submitted by Amis des Etrangers au Togo (A.D.E.T.), 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world**

The world population currently stands at more than 7 billion, and it will rise to more than 9 billion by 2050. That population comprises seniors (age 60 years for developing countries, 65 years for developed countries), adults (18-59 years), adolescents (13-17 years), children (6-12 years), those in early childhood (0-5 years) and those still in the womb.

Within these age brackets, there are groups of people such as those with disabilities (motor, hearing, visual, mental, multiple disabilities, deformities), women, girls, boys, elderly people, indigenous people, migrants, unemployed persons, sick persons, homosexuals, albinos, pygmies, castes, Roma, rich people, poor people, orphans, street children, prisoners, drug addicts, the mentally ill, and other minorities.

#### 1. Social development in the past.

Before capitalism people, created by God, lived in a holy environment and they sustained themselves with the gifts of nature. There was no discrimination. With the advent of fire, capitalism and power, people now chase after financial power, political and technological power, and spiritual power. Thus, powerful people dominate the others in their setting.

This has given rise to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and exclusion compounded by the growth of corruption. These phenomena have a harmful impact on persons with disabilities, the elderly, indigenous peoples, vulnerable women, widows, teenage mothers, orphaned children, migrants, the sick, albinos, the unemployed, street children, addicts, prisoners, poor women, and political and religious minorities.

It was in recognition of all this that the late Nelson Mandela, Mary Robinson and: ADET, an NGO, joined in signing a statement on the occasion of the first World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held at Durban, South Africa in 2001.

It declared that “As a new century begins, we believe each society needs to ask itself certain questions. Is it sufficiently inclusive? Is it non-discriminatory? Are its norms of behaviour based on the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

“Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all kinds of related intolerance have not gone away. We recognize that they persist in the new century and that their persistence is rooted in fear: fear of what is different, fear of the other, fear of the loss of personal security. And while we recognize that human fear is in itself ineradicable, we maintain that its consequences are not ineradicable.”

It is clear that social development cannot be built on fear, on mistrust of others, and that it must instead be based on tolerance and diversity, on the inclusion of all in the development process.

“We all constitute one human family”, they continued. It is self-evident that “we must strive to remind ourselves of this great possibility. Instead of allowing

diversity of race and culture to become a limiting factor in human exchange and development, we must refocus our understanding, discern in such diversity the potential for mutual enrichment, and realize that it is the interchange between great traditions of human spirituality that offers the best prospect for the persistence of the human spirit itself. For too long such diversity has been treated as threat rather than gift. And too often that has been expressed in racial contempt and conflict, in exclusion, discrimination and intolerance.” These remarks were reinforced by the declaration of Heads of State and Government on 22 September 2011 in New York, acknowledging that the scourge of racism and discrimination still persists in all parts of the world.

2. What can be done to strengthen social development in today’s world?

1. We must fight against corruption.

2. We must fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, related intolerance and exclusion.

3. We must develop an inclusive social programme that accords value to all layers of society. Some countries have made a start and now have to improve this policy, but those that have not yet begun must implement the 16 sustainable development goals.

4. We must redistribute public goods to all.

5. We must develop social assistance for the most disadvantaged.

6. We must reduce the gap between nations and within nations.

7. We must develop insurance against catastrophic and other risks and provide retirement pensions for all.

8. We must undertake legislative and institutional reforms and encourage civil society and the private sector to contribute to the development process in order to create jobs for everyone, everywhere.

9. We must develop an inclusive policy and reform statistical data to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

10. We must promote peace and security and respect for human rights.

11. We must combat climate change by doing away with fossil fuel-based industries and campaigning for reforestation.

12. We must modernize Africa’s still-traditional agriculture in order to eradicate hunger and poverty.

13. We must create services in the social area. For example: provide care for all elderly persons everywhere, create social housing for migrants and provide for their social care, liberalize recruitment in the public administration and in electoral processes.

14. We must decentralize government at the local level and involve civil society in local development.

15. We must strengthen countries’ democratization and power-sharing.

16. We must mobilize the local community around public projects, and develop local techniques, science and cultures.

17. We must pursue the women's empowerment and gender promotion without discrimination.
18. We must involve the civil society organizations that have taken part in preparing the SDGs.
19. We must ensure financing for humanitarian works, and for civil society organizations in particular.
20. We must encourage public-private partnerships.
21. We must guarantee education for all and at all ages, throughout the national territory.
22. We must develop public health programmes at all levels: prenatal, perinatal and postnatal, for mother and child, communicable and non-communicable diseases, epidemiological diseases and others.
23. We must apply the world human rights agenda in the cities.
24. We must involve the social groups mentioned above in the taking of decisions that affect their lives.

### 3. Conclusion

Pope Francis did not mince his words when he spoke at the opening of the 70th Summit held in New York on 25 September 2015 to adopt the sustainable development agenda, the three pillars of which are social development, economic development, and environmental development. He said: "To give to each his own, to cite the classic definition of justice, means that no human individual or group can consider itself absolute, permitted to bypass the dignity and the rights of other individuals or their social groupings. The effective distribution of power (political, economic, defence-related, technological, etc.) among a plurality of subjects, and the creation of a juridical system for regulating claims and interests, are one concrete way of limiting power. Yet today's world presents us with many false rights and — at the same time — broad sectors which are vulnerable, victims of power badly exercised. [...] That is why their rights must be forcefully affirmed, by working to protect the environment and by putting an end to exclusion." That is why "our world demands of all government leaders a will which is effective, practical and constant, concrete steps and immediate measures for preserving and improving the natural environment and thus putting an end as quickly as possible to the phenomenon of social and economic exclusion, with its baneful consequences: human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labour"... .