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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 United Deeds (Actions concertées), 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

In today's world, social development is about improving people's well-being at all levels of society so that they can achieve their full potential. It is often linked to community projects such as microenterprises, women's associations, youth work, cooperatives and programmes for the well-being of mothers and children.

It can also refer to any government policy or programme about a particular dimension of social development, such as poverty alleviation, community literacy work, the fight for food self-sufficiency or improving the quality of and levels of access to education and health services for all citizens.

For United Deeds, this concept is clearly justified by the need to invest in the development of the population. Given the wide scope of social development as a subject area, the present report focuses on our goals for job creation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Goal 1: Create microbusinesses for young people from the children's home, SOS Children's Village

There is an SOS Children's Village in Côte d'Ivoire, where we have identified several problems. From the age of 18, young people have no financial or technical support to be able to find a job or start their own business. In effect, once they reach the age of majority, they can no longer stay in the children's home, as other, much younger orphans arrive, and those running the home do not have the capacity to deal with so many people. The young people are therefore left to their own devices. That is a matter of concern to society, as they could become involved in delinquency, drugs, prostitution and other antisocial behaviour.

In order to remedy this problem, United Deeds has established a training programme to teach young people technical trades, such as being a mechanic or a chef.

In terms of training as a chef, young people will be given practical lessons, working on special menus so that they can cook from food vans. Those vans will serve the suburbs, and the menus will be adapted to the local culture of the country in which they are located.

In terms of training as a mechanic, young people will be given equally practical lessons that will qualify them to work in private garages with which United Deeds has employment agreements.

Establishing these mini employment programmes could therefore help the young people for whom they are intended to leave their children's home with confidence.

Goal 2: strengthening women's agricultural cooperatives in rural areas

United Deeds visited the rural town of Akoupé in the south of the country. The town is made up of twenty agricultural cooperatives that need support with supplies and production plant, as well as with packing, storing, processing and marketing their products.

For the start of the project — and here, we are talking about basic needs such the packaging and storage stages — United Deeds will provide support by relying

on funding from sponsors and local experts. But United Deeds will be relying on international financial contributions and on cooperation from other United Nations agencies when it comes to the heavy costs of the processing, marketing and supply of their products, in order to leave the completed project on a sustainable footing.

Goal 3: social integration of persons with disabilities in Côte d'Ivoire

This programme is one of our long-term goals; we believe that it requires considerable attention, as it is undoubtedly a widespread issue across Africa.

Persons with disabilities are heavily marginalized and neglected in the social sector of Côte d'Ivoire, as is the case everywhere in Africa. No structures are adjusted or arranged so that, as well as having their care needs met, persons with disabilities can also be integrated into the world of work.

In conclusion, we, United Deeds, want to say this:

Social development in the contemporary world, and especially in developing countries, is a major issue and cannot be solved unless every organization that genuinely wants to achieve this goal coordinates and makes a contribution.

From our point of view, the crux of the matter is that non-governmental organizations in the global South do not have sufficient access to funding.

Many efforts have certainly been made at the level of the United Nations to tackle this issue; programmes and discussion groups have been established in recent decades; we have been able to better understand and get to grips with the problems of social development; but despite that, we must admit that a large number of major challenges still remain and have not changed.

United Deeds proposes that the Council or other bodies establish a line of credit for those non-governmental organizations that are based in developing countries and that have socially-focused goals; those organizations would then be able to access funding to finance projects for those populations.

The traditional system of securing grants or funding is fine, but it is not sufficiently effective in the sense that the lead time between an application being accepted and the funds being accessible can run to many years. We also realize that the majority of non-governmental organizations in the global South do not even know where the funding sources can be found.

We believe that a line of credit for serious organizations in consultative status with the Council should be established under the supervision of the United Nations.