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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: strategies for the eradication of poverty to
achieve sustainable development for all**

Statement submitted by IBREA Foundation, 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

Mindful living for poverty reduction

IBREA Foundation fully supports the UN efforts to end poverty. When millions of us struggle to survive, we believe, our real human potential can't flourish. Poverty eradication is the most basic foundation for solving all other global problems. We must free ourselves from poverty, and we must do this by working all together towards that goal, whether we live in poverty or not.

Extreme poverty rates have been cut by more than half since 1990. This is an amazing achievement however; much remains to be done to reach poverty eradication. Concentrated in the most fragile regions of the world, 836 million people, about 1 in 8 people still live in extreme poverty. At the same time, there are individuals and regions in the world having huge wealth.

It is calculated that if only 1% of the combined wealth of the richest nations in the world was invested in solving global poverty, we could achieve it. There is a clear imbalance. But could giving this 1% truly solve the problem in itself? Technical measures, such as providing aid, are definitely necessary. However, we think that in order to be sustainable, they must be accompanied by our moral choices, by our collective mindset and will to really solve the problem. When receiving aid, nations and individuals need to use the resources well in order to gradually take ownership and responsibility for their future. And the nations and individuals on the giving end should provide their assistance free from any political bias or expectation.

Whether we live in poverty or not we all need to work towards poverty eradication. Whether we are on the giving or the receiving side, the same mindset should apply. At IBREA Foundation, we see our global problems as our individual problems. Everybody is important, there is no exception. We have all created poverty, and we must all find the solution to poverty. IBREA Foundation's work is based on this standard. By providing brain-based holistic education, IBREA Foundation aims to raise awareness among individuals and communities in countries around the world, of their great human value and dignity, and their deep longing for solving our world's problems — including the eradication of poverty. Based on the most recent scientific discoveries about the human brain, such as our brain's innate tendency for empathy, or our brain's great capacity of endurance and perseverance, IBREA's curriculum helps individuals understand that their brain and body are naturally built to create health, prosperity and equality. We just have to unleash our potential.

Through our educational projects in different countries, we have seen young girls and boys grow out of poverty. In Liberia, we have seen our students go from extreme poverty and almost dropping out of school, to gradually develop their confidence and willpower while also attracting support and trust in their goal to create an enterprise of their own. In El Salvador, we have seen our students, who were teenage single mums, struggling to bring food to their children, develop their strength to find a job, make it to university, and bring stability to their households. This is the power of the human mind that we have experienced in different countries. Even if resources are scarce, when individuals work on their inner

capacity, they can find the way to gather resources and create a brighter future. We have also provided our education to wealthy individuals in the US, seeing them expand their generosity, be more mindful about their spending, and share their wealth with others who need support.

To contribute to the discussion and action on the eradication of poverty, we would like to overall suggest more mindful living in all communities and nations, independently of their level of wealth. It's not only necessary for rich individuals or nations to give to poor individuals or nations. Through our projects, we have also seen unhealthy habits among poor communities, wasting resources and not sharing equally. Mindful living should be practiced across the board.

Specifically, we would like to provide the following three recommendations:

- Less wasting. We produce too much and we end up throwing away a lot of things that are new or still usable. Also, we must recycle more. Again, wealthy individuals or nations tend to waste more, but it's not necessarily the case. We should all waste less.
- More sharing. We should always keep an attitude of sharing. Whatever amount of resources we have, we can share with others. It is only natural for those who have more to give more. However, even if we have little, we can always keep a mindset of sharing.
- Mindful spending. Our levels of consumption are often times too high. We spend a lot of money on things that are not so necessary for our living. While wealthier individuals and nations can have a stronger habit of careless spending, this also applies to poor individuals and nations. For instance, we have seen people living in poverty spend more on expensive fast food than on vegetables, which are much cheaper and healthier.

In conclusion, we believe poverty eradication starts with individuals, with our own moral choices in our daily lives. If many individuals practice mindful living, this can gradually lead to structural changes and ultimately contribute to the eradication of poverty.
