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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: poverty eradication**

Implementation of the resolution on promoting social integration

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/12. The report provides an overview of current national policies and programmes towards social integration in different regions, taking into consideration its relation with poverty eradication. It focuses on social protection, employment and group-specific interventions, as well as broad-based participation, as effective tools in advancing social integration. It highlights some limitations of selected interventions and notes remaining challenges in the area. The report also underlines the importance of further exchange of good policies and practices on social integration. It concludes with recommendations for future action.

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I. Introduction

1. At its forty-eighth session in February 2010, the Commission for Social Development adopted its first resolution on promoting social integration. In the resolution, the Commission recognized the considerable progress made in eradicating poverty and advancing United Nations instruments pertaining to youth, women, persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous people. At the same time, it emphasized that a broader recognition of the importance of social integration and inclusion and more comprehensive policy frameworks are required for addressing the specific needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities, social groups and individuals.

2. The present report highlights current national priorities, policies and programmes towards social integration, taking into consideration their relevance to poverty eradication. The examples of effective interventions to promote social integration contained in this report demonstrate that many comprehensive and cross-sectoral approaches to social integration through poverty eradication and other measures have been taken at the national level. The report also highlights the crucial role of social integration and a people-centred approach to combating poverty. A social integration approach to poverty eradication requires addressing root causes of poverty and its multiple dimensions, including a lack of access to basic services, vulnerability, inequality and limited participation and voice. Investing in people and their social and human capital is therefore indispensable for combating poverty and exclusion and advancing a “society for all”.

3. The report is based on inputs received from United Nations regional commissions and United Nations country offices through the Bureau for Development Policy of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The report concludes with specific recommendations for future action.

II. Overview of policies and programmes towards social integration

4. The critical role of social integration in advancing social development and reducing poverty has been increasingly recognized by many Governments across regions. Some regions have taken distinctive paths in promoting social integration. A significant number of countries have shifted from implementing fragmented programmes or ad hoc initiatives to adopting more coherent, coordinated and integrated cross-sectoral policies that are more closely aligned with national development goals and poverty reduction strategies.

5. The adoption of the Windhoek Declaration on Social Development and the Social Policy Framework for Africa by the African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Social Development, and its subsequent endorsement by the Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Governments held in January 2009, underscores the collective desire to promote social integration as the most encompassing and relevant concept for social development for the African continent.¹

6. Despite significant overall progress in reducing poverty, the Asia-Pacific region is home to 60 per cent of the world’s poor, and social exclusion, chronic

¹ See *African Social Development Report 2009: Placing Social Integration at the Centre of Africa’s Development*, Economic Commission for Africa (2010).

poverty and entrenched social and economic inequalities still prevail. Thus, the recent food, energy and financial crises have increased social vulnerabilities in the region and highlighted the key role of social integration in advancing sustainable and inclusive development. Owing to differences in socio-economic conditions and development strategies, countries in this region are pursuing a variety of policies to tackle social exclusion, provide social protection and promote social integration.

7. In Western Asia, social integration efforts focus on improving access to the labour market, expanding social protection and including marginalized groups and individuals, such as persons with disabilities, in the development process. Within the framework of the Arab Decade for Disabled Persons 2004-2013, several countries have revisited their existing policies and enacted new laws to improve persons with disabilities' access to health services, education and training, employment, transportation, and information and communication.²

8. In the wake of Mexico and Brazil's pioneering initiatives, conditional cash transfer programmes have been implemented in most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and now constitute a key component of national efforts to achieve social integration and reduce inequalities. Furthermore, a few countries have embarked on developing comprehensive social protection frameworks while improving access to basic social services for all.

9. Social inclusion and cohesion have long been major components of the political commitment of the European Union (EU) to the sustainability, stability and prosperity of its member States. In response to the current economic and financial crisis, a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Europe 2020, was adopted in June 2010, succeeding the 2000-2010 Lisbon Strategy. The new strategy aims to help the EU recover from the crisis through boosting competitiveness, productivity, growth potential, social cohesion and economic convergence.³

III. Effective interventions in promoting social integration

10. The instruments promoting social integration vary in scope and focus. Poverty, beyond inadequate income to ensure adequate living conditions and involving a lack of access to basic social services, is increasingly seen as a form of exclusion. As a result, poverty reduction strategies, including social protection and better access to education, health care and housing are often regarded as indispensable for fighting exclusion and promoting social integration. Similarly, policies facilitating access to employment, as well as employment guarantee schemes and public work programmes, have been credited with contributing to greater social cohesion.

11. Social integration is also advanced through a variety of measures promoting individual and group participation in civic, social, economic and political activities. Some such participatory measures involve capacity-building for local governments and support for civic engagement institutions, including non-governmental organizations. Other measures promote citizens' participation in the very design, monitoring and evaluation of social policies and programmes impacting their lives.

12. Within a universal framework of social integration policies, there is a need for special provisioning to reach out to those most marginalized, including persons with

² See E/ESCWA/SDD/2007/IG.1/5.

³ See http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm.

disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrant workers and others. It is equally important to continue tackling different forms of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity or other characteristics. Equal opportunity and affirmative action measures may have to accompany the above-mentioned strategies so as to remedy long-standing inequalities.

A. Social protection, employment and group-specific interventions towards social integration

Social protection initiatives

13. Social protection shields people from risks and prevents them from falling into poverty owing to unemployment, sickness, disability or old age. Its developmental function aims at capacity-building and investing in human capital. Social protection also has a social justice function, contributing to greater cohesion and solidarity in society. Taking into consideration its multiple functions, social protection is increasingly seen as an essential building block of any strategy aimed at achieving social integration. A growing number of developing countries have been designing and implementing a variety of social protection initiatives, including conditional and unconditional cash transfers, social pensions, guaranteed employment schemes, and other programmes. In effect, a wide range of social transfers combined with basic services delivery have, for the most part, become a method of choice in tackling multidimensional aspects of poverty and social exclusion.

14. Such social protection interventions are based on the assumption that poverty entails not just a lack of income but also a lack of access to basic services and a high vulnerability to economic shocks, often resulting in unemployment or poor health. Consequently, social protection programmes aim to tackle many aspects of poverty through investment in human and social capital. Such investments are increasingly seen as indispensable for advancing social integration.

15. In developing countries, social protection interventions mostly focus on poor families with children and seek to stop and reverse the intergenerational transfer of poverty. The interventions consist of small cash grants, sometimes conditional on a child's school attendance and regular health check-ups. They vary in scope, coverage and programme design; some provide child and family benefits, others offer pensions to older persons, while others provide cash grants for people affected by HIV/AIDS or persons with disabilities. They may also include subsidized health insurance or health financing, and offer unemployment benefit or guaranteed employment for a specified period of time.

16. Conditional cash transfers vary in coverage from comprehensive programmes reaching millions of families in Brazil to pilot projects covering a few thousand in Kenya and Nicaragua. They assist 40 per cent of the population in Ecuador, around 20 per cent in Brazil and Mexico and just 1 per cent in Cambodia. The expenditure varies from about 0.50 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico to 0.08 per cent of GDP in Chile. The cash benefit covers 20 per cent of household consumption in Mexico, 4 per cent in Honduras, and smaller amounts in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Pakistan.⁴

⁴ A. Fiszbein, and N. Shady, *Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing Present and Future Poverty*, World Bank (2009).

17. Cash transfers focus on the poorest segments of the population. In the Latin American programmes Bono de Desarrollo Humano in Ecuador, Chile Solidario in Chile, Familias en Acción in Colombia and Oportunidades in Mexico, between 60 per cent and 75 per cent of income transfers go to the poorest 40 per cent of the population. Yet on average across the Latin American region, these programmes account for only 2.3 per cent of total public social spending and 0.25 per cent of GDP, with some assessments pointing out that their impact on the indicators of poverty and income inequality at the national level may be somewhat modest.⁵

18. The majority of social protection programmes are not comprehensive, but they do contain elements, or building blocks, that form a foundation of a potential wide-ranging system. Such building blocks comprise basic social services and/or basic social transfers. Basic social services include access to primary education, health, food security and nutrition, housing, and sanitation. Basic social transfers consist of child/family benefits, social pensions for older persons, and unemployment benefit or guaranteed employment. Flagship comprehensive social protection programmes contain a number of such building blocks. The most comprehensive of them have been carried out in Brazil, Mexico and Chile.⁶

19. The Bolsa Familia programme of Brazil is the largest conditional cash transfer programme and provides monthly subsidies to more than 12 million poor families, subject to the fulfilment of some conditions such as school attendance and post- and antenatal care.⁷ Since its inception in 2003, Bolsa Familia has been credited with helping to reduce inequality and poverty in Brazil. The Fourth Millennium Development Goal national progress report indicates a reduction of extreme poverty from 12 per cent in 2003 to 4.8 per cent in 2008.⁸

20. The Oportunidades programme substituted isolated income transfers, such as in-kind and price discounts, with a targeted income transfer delivered in cash with specific conditions. The programme seeks to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion through enhancing the human capital of those living in extreme poverty. It covered 5 million families (25 per cent of the total population), with a budget of \$3.3 billion in 2007. Beneficiary families receive a package of health, nutrition and education benefits.⁹

⁵ See *Social Panorama of Latin America*, “Trends in social spending, cash transfers and conditional transfer programmes”, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (2009).

⁶ C. Jacquier and P. Mertens, “The Social Protection Floor: International Experience in Implementation: from policy to practice”, the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization (27 August 2010).

⁷ Kathy Lindert, “Brazil: Bolsa Familia Programme — Scaling-up Cash Transfers for the Poor”, Sourcebook on Emerging Good Practice in Managing for Development Results, World Bank. Available at <http://www.mfdr.org/sourcebook/6-1Brazil-BolsaFamilia.pdf>.

⁸ See <http://www.mds.gov.br/bolsafamilia> (accessed on 1 October 2010).

⁹ See Santiago Levy, *Progress against Poverty: Sustaining Mexico's Progres-a-Oportunidades Program* (in Spanish), Brookings Institution Press (2006). Available at http://www.brookings.edu/global/progress/pap_spanish_final.pdf; see also “Beating the Odds: How Progres-a/Oportunidades Became Mexico's Major Poverty Alleviation Programme and An International Best Practice?”, Evelyne Rodriguez. Available at http://www.undprcc.lk/ext/mdgi_regional_workshop_2007/pdf/Social%20Safety%20Nets%20and%20Micro%20Finance/Mexico_PROGRE_SSA.pdf.

21. The Chile Solidario programme was initiated in 2002 as “a system of social protection for families in extreme poverty that combined aid and skills development in an integrated approach”.¹⁰ The programme focuses on several dimensions of family life: identification, health, education, family dynamics, housing conditions, work and income.¹⁰ Chile Solidario has been further consolidated into a support network for all social groups facing vulnerable situations.¹¹

22. Other social transfer programmes in Latin America are less comprehensive but contain some of the essential building blocks of an inclusive social protection system. The Red Solidaria programme in El Salvador¹² targets both the family and community levels. It aims to improve the delivery of, and access to, basic social services and to diversify the sources of incomes of both poor families and poor communities. Solidaridad¹³ in the Dominican Republic provides cash transfers through a bank-issued debit card for food and liquid gas purchases at local grocery stores, conditioned on vaccination and height/weight monitoring of all children. In Peru, the conditional cash transfer programme Juntos, implemented since 2005, provides poor families with a lump sum to help alleviate poverty in the short term while working to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty through the development of human capital, through access to education and health services.¹⁴ The Familias en Acción programme in Colombia has expanded its coverage to urban poor and over 200,000 displaced persons, as well as indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme uses a debit card system to provide short-term food assistance to vulnerable individuals and families, while its conditional component aims at upgrading the employment skills of the recipients.¹⁵

23. In other regions of the world, social protection programmes are at various stages of development and coverage. In sub-Saharan Africa social protection programmes differ in structure and scope across countries, reflecting differences in demographic characteristics, social and economic conditions, and financial capacity.

24. South Africa’s national social protection framework is a fairly comprehensive social protection system that combines cash transfers with basic services in health care, basic education and subsidized housing, water, electricity and sanitation. Cash transfers are offered for the most vulnerable groups of the population, including older persons, veterans, persons with disabilities, and families caring for children, including foster families. South Africa has a non-contributory, in addition to a

¹⁰ See Julieta Palma and Raúl Urzúa, “Anti-poverty policies and citizenry: the ‘Chile Solidario’ experience”, Institute of Public Affairs, University of Chile, Policy Papers (2005).

¹¹ See http://www.chilesolidario.gov.cl/en/chs_en.php.

¹² See Tatiana Feitosa de Britta, “The Challenges of El Salvador’s Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, Red Solidaria”, IPC (2007). Available at <http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/pub/IPCCountryStudy9.pdf>.

¹³ Solidaridad is complemented by a related programme, “Incentivo a la Asistencia Escolar”, which targets poor families with children of ages 6-12 in exchange for school attendance; see also <http://www.iadb.org/news-releases/2009-08/english/dominican-republic-to-receive-70-million-for-social-protection-system--5578.html>.

¹⁴ Elizaveta Perova and Renos Vakis, “Welfare impacts of the Juntos Programme in Peru: Evidence from non-experimental evaluation”, World Bank (March 2009).

¹⁵ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Social Panorama of Latin America, “Trends in social spending, cash transfers and conditional transfer programmes”; see also Pablo Villatoro, “Conditional cash transfer programmes: experiences from Latin America”, CEPAL Review No. 86, 2005.

contributory, pension scheme for older persons and persons with disabilities. Overall, a comprehensive range of transfers is provided to 12 million people. Besides older persons, the programme has provided vital support for HIV/AIDS affected households, in which grandparents care for their grandchildren. The extension of the old age pension programme contributed to an improvement in the health and nutrition of children, especially girls, and overall poverty reduction.¹ In 2009, social protection expenditure reached 3.3 per cent of GDP. Social protection coverage has been gradually expanded in line with the expectation that cash transfers, complemented by basic services, will eventually help to break the cycle of the intergenerational transmission of poverty.¹⁶

25. In sub-Saharan Africa, social protection programmes mainly target the most vulnerable and sometimes integrate cash transfers with service provisions. Kenya's cash transfer programme for orphans and vulnerable children, which covers 100,000 households and 230,000 orphans and vulnerable children, combines transfers to households in extreme poverty with conditionalities on health and schooling, as do the Latin American conditional transfer programmes.¹⁷ Namibia has three major social programmes, offering a quasi-universal older persons' pension, a disability grant and a system of child allowance benefits, in addition to small-scale cash transfer programmes.¹⁸ Zambia has a pilot social cash transfer scheme¹⁹ that targets older persons taking care of orphans in the Kalomo district. Ghana's livelihood empowerment advancement programme covers several categories of households in extreme poverty, combining, where possible, service utilization and transfers.²⁰ In Mozambique, the food subsidy programme targets older persons, people with disabilities, people affected by chronic illness, and expectant mothers suffering from malnutrition.²⁰

26. In Asia, several models of social assistance programmes include food subsidies, guarantees of minimum income, income support through cash transfers, and conditional and unconditional transfers to households and individuals.²¹ In Cambodia, social protection programmes consist mainly of food distribution, food-for-work, and labour-intensive public works programmes. The minimum living standards guarantee schemes (Dibao) in the People's Republic of China provide regular cash and/or in-kind support to poor rural and urban households. The programme appears to be successful at covering urban households where per capita income falls below locally defined poverty lines. The non-conditional mean-tested Benazir Income Support Programme in Pakistan is the third largest public budget cash allocation in the country and constitutes 0.3 per cent of GDP. It aims to increase purchasing power of economically vulnerable families. In the 2008-2009 period, the programme covered 15 per cent of the population. In the Philippines, the Pantawid Pamilyang

¹⁶ Vusi Madonsela, Director General, Department of Social Development, South Africa, "A presentation on South Africa's Basic Social Protection Floor" to the high-level special event on South-South Cooperation (2 February 2010).

¹⁷ As of June 2010, see <https://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/transfer/countries/kenya>.

¹⁸ See *Poverty in Focus*, No. 15, International Poverty Centre (2008).

¹⁹ Financed largely by GTZ, Irish Aid and the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom (DFID).

²⁰ See Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper 116 (April 2010).

²¹ See S. Wening Handayani and C. Burkley, editors, "Social assistance and conditional cash transfers. Proceedings of the regional workshop", Asian Development Bank (July 2009). Available at <http://www.adb.org/documents/conference/social-assistance-cct/proceedings-social-assistance-cct.pdf>.

Pilipino Programme is one of the more comprehensive social assistance programmes in Asia. Following the example of conditional cash transfers in Brazil and Mexico, it offers grants to families living in poverty to improve the health, nutrition and education of their children, conditioned on health check-ups and school attendance. Grievance committees have been established at municipal, regional and national levels to ensure proper implementation and transparency.²¹ The National Social Aid Fund²² of the Syrian Arab Republic is a cash transfer programme aimed at assisting older persons, widowed and separated women, orphans, persons with disabilities, and families of prisoners.²³ It covers 46 per cent of the households under the national lower poverty line, and 69 per cent of all households under the upper poverty line. Based on the results of evaluation and impact assessment, it is expected to be a long-term public institutional social safety net.

27. Building on the conceptual framework of conditional cash transfers in developing countries and inspired by the success of Oportunidades in Mexico, the first conditional cash transfer programme was recently carried out in the United States. The privately funded pilot programme Opportunity NYC is being implemented in the most disadvantaged community districts of New York City. It provides income to families living in poverty for education, health, workforce participation and job training activities (Family Rewards). It also offers work incentives to adults living in subsidized housing (Work Rewards) and modest payments to students for academic achievement (Spark). The cash incentives are sufficient for short-term poverty reduction and encourage families and individuals to make long-term investments in human capital.²⁴

28. Recognizing the importance of ensuring social protection for all, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination²⁵ adopted, in April 2009, the Social Protection Floor initiative as one of the nine United Nations joint initiatives to cope with the effects of the economic crisis. The Social Protection Floor approach promotes universal access to essential social security transfers and social services in the areas of health, water and sanitation, education, food and housing. The approach focuses on the need to implement comprehensive, coherent and coordinated social protection and employment policies to guarantee services and social transfers across the life cycle, paying special attention to vulnerable groups. Calculations by several United Nations agencies suggest that a basic floor of social transfers is globally affordable, even if the funding is not yet available everywhere.²⁶

29. Although social protection programmes aimed at poverty reduction and social integration have, in recent years, steadily gained ground, their success depends on effective delivery and sufficient financial resources. In general, middle income countries have the capacity to implement such programmes and gradually increase their coverage. Low income countries, however, face financial and other constraints.

²² See <http://www.undp.org.sy/index.php/our-work/social-development-for-poverty-reduction/398-establishing-the-national-social-aid-fund-nsaf-in-syria->.

²³ The Fund is implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (2007-2011) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund.

²⁴ See http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/html/programs/opportunity_nyc.shtml; see also http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/downloads/pdf/report_opportunity_nyc.pdf.

²⁵ See <http://www.unsceb.org/ceb/home>.

²⁶ See <http://www.socialsecurityextension.org/gimi/gess/ShowTheme.do?tid=1321>.

The programmes they implement cover small segments of the population, are often pilot in nature, and depend on the support of donors.

30. Moreover, to be successful, social protection interventions should be a part of a comprehensive social protection strategy and involve consideration of its policy basis, design and targeting, as well as institutional arrangements. The majority of developing countries lack such a strategy. Where social protection policies exist, they tend to be fragmented between different types of programmes, sectors and target groups and cover predominantly workers in the public sector and in the formal private sector. A particular concern is the lack of social insurance coverage for the self-employed, contractual workers and all those, particularly women, engaged in informal work.

31. Further, the success of cash transfer programmes depends on the availability of basic social services, and the capacity to coordinate efforts between the relevant education, health care and nutrition programmes. The development of sustainable protection systems also requires adequate institutional and regulatory frameworks and informed citizens who are aware of their rights and entitlements. What's more, the absence of systematic programme monitoring and evaluation mechanisms often make it difficult to assess the impacts of interventions made at the national and subnational levels.

32. Questions have also been raised about administrative weaknesses, exclusion risks and costs of targeted social transfers. In particular, conditional cash transfers have been sometimes found to be overly paternalistic and stigmatizing to the recipients. By focusing often exclusively on families with young children, they exclude other potential beneficiaries, like persons with disabilities or older persons. Moreover, targeted or conditional transfers considered effective in middle-income countries may not be appropriate in low-income and least developed countries where the vast majority of the population suffers from poverty and exclusion. Thus, the viability of targeting social protection depends on the nature of poverty as well as the specific social and political circumstances prevailing in a given country. Universal approaches are therefore preferable where heavy investments in the monitoring of conditionality are neither practical nor feasible.

Social integration through employment

33. Various innovative initiatives are being implemented with the objective of improving employability and generating short- and long-term employment opportunities for vulnerable communities. Activities include labour-intensive, small-scale public works projects; incentive-driven targeted schemes to support employment of marginalized groups; and wage subsidy schemes for encouraging small and medium enterprises to hire job-seeking youth. Overall, the social integration of youth through employment has gained increased attention in recent years, particularly in countries where the youth population is increasing rapidly, as is the case in most countries of Africa and Western Asia. Many Governments and youth organizations have introduced development programmes and activities aimed at encouraging young people's economic participation and empowerment, and youth employment, including volunteer employability schemes for young people.

34. Kuwait's Enterprise Development Programme provides a holistic package of enterprise development tools and techniques for enterprise creation and enterprise growth, with particular attention to Kuwaiti women's entrepreneurship. The INJAZ

programme in Jordan prepares Jordanian youth to join the job market by enhancing their employability and entrepreneurial skills.²⁷

35. In 2005, India enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which provides a legal guarantee of employment to every rural household in exchange for 100 days of volunteer work.²⁸ It also seeks to create durable assets and strengthen the rural poor's livelihood-based resources.²⁸ The programme addresses the causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion. It also helps to slow down rural-to-urban migration.

36. In Liberia, the national vacation job programme provides students with opportunities to acquire job experience, work ethics and discipline. The Gambia Priority Employment Programme provides skills development and entrepreneurship training to young men and women, including in the context of rural community enterprises. In Lesotho, the Promotion of Youth Employment towards Poverty Reduction Programme pursues a similar objective, with the additional component of HIV/AIDS education and prevention, and enhancing the participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the national response to HIV/AIDS.²⁹

37. In Ethiopia, public works programmes are implemented in the form of food-for-work, cash-for-work or employment-generation schemes. Public works programmes aim to assist people who suffer transitory income shocks, but they are often short-lived and may not provide a permanent source of income to reduce poverty and exclusion. A productive safety net programme, launched in 2005 as part of the Food Security Programme, was developed to address these concerns. It provides grants or food to households that are chronically food-insecure and aims to build community assets through labour-intensive public works.³⁰ The choice of public works projects is driven by local communities and includes the construction of roads and soil and water conservation development.³¹

Programmes aimed at social integration of specific groups

Persons with disabilities

38. Several Governments have enacted legislative and administrative provisions in support of persons with disabilities. Among them, the Jordanian Law on the rights of persons with disabilities and its national disability strategy (2007-2015), which formalized State interventions to support persons with disabilities. Jordan

²⁷ See www.injaz.org.jo.

²⁸ See <http://www.undp.org/poverty/>.

²⁹ The project was implemented with the support of ILO and UNDP (2007-2011); see http://www.undp.org.ls/poverty/youth_employment.php (accessed on 1 October 2010).

³⁰ Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) was supported by a consortium of nine development partners — Canadian International Development Agency, DFID, European Commission, Irish Aid, Royal Netherlands Embassy, Swedish International Development Agency, United States Agency for International Development, World Food Programme and the World Bank, that provide cash and in kind resources to the programme. PSNP is one of the largest social protection programmes in Africa and reached 7.5 million people in 2006, and is expected to expand into the second phase in 2010; see also <http://www.odi.org.uk/work/projects/details.asp?id=1144&title=productive-safety-net-programme-psnp-ethiopia>; http://www.dagethiopia.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24&Itemid=17.

³¹ D. O. Gilligan, J. Hoddinott and A. S. Taffesse, "The Impact of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme and its Linkages" International Food Policy Research Institute Discussion Paper (December 2008).

established the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 to formulate national plans and policies, implement the national disability strategy, review and amend legislation, create centres for services and research on disabilities, and set public standards for programmes and services for persons with disabilities.³² Qatar's national legislation imposes penalties in cases where provisions prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities are violated.³³ In Japan, comprehensive legal and administrative reforms in various areas affecting persons with disabilities have been initiated. Such reforms include facilitating the transition from institutionalized living to community living; raising awareness on disability issues; prevention, early detection, and monitoring of abuse; and undertaking surveys and research to capture the reality of persons with disabilities.³⁴

39. In several countries efforts have been made to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities. A number of free or low-priced public housing, transportation, telecommunication, health and monthly social security allowances have been offered to persons with disabilities in the United Arab Emirates.³⁵ Canada enacted policies to increase accessibility in national transportation networks; developed an emergency preparedness guide; offered financial assistance for residential rehabilitation, as well as tax relief to persons with disabilities and their families and relatives who provide care for them. It also provided a social protection floor for persons with disabilities.³⁵

40. In the area of education, training and employment, the United Arab Emirates³⁵ implemented School Initiative Everyone and produced a technical manual for social integration of persons with visual impairment into the general educational system; Egypt guarantees 5 per cent of jobs in all sectors to persons with disabilities, in addition to granting a disability allowance and providing vocational training. Uganda's³⁵ mine-action victim assistance project supports mine survivors and their families through grants for livelihood support items, such as wheelchairs, and vocational training. Chile³⁵ has developed guidelines on how to protect and care for persons with disabilities affected by the 2010 earthquake as well as providing relief services to persons with disabilities and their families. It also set up preferential quotas for persons with disabilities in public employment.

41. Other initiatives include Kenya's project on mainstreaming disability issues in national development;³⁶ the Jordanian project "Towards Better Integration of Persons with Disabilities through ICT and Networking";³⁷ and a series of initiatives to protect persons with disabilities in cases of emergency in the Republic of Korea.

³² See "Mapping Inequity: Persons with Physical Disabilities in Jordan", Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (2009).

³³ See A/HRC/WG.6/7/QAT/1.

³⁴ "Good Policies and Practices that Promote Social Integration in Asia and the Pacific", Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

³⁵ Compilation of best practices: implementation of articles 11, 19 and 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2001). Available at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1541>.

³⁶ Consolidated reply from UNDP Kenya to E-dialogue on "Public awareness and NGO capacity-building for integration of the disabled".

³⁷ Consolidated reply from UNDP Jordan to E-dialogue on "Public awareness and NGO capacity-building for integration of the disabled".

Indigenous peoples

42. Social inclusion of indigenous peoples is high on the agenda in Latin America, where the first regional meeting on the rights to consultation and free, prior and informed consent was held in September 2010.³⁸ Among recent initiatives was the publication of a socio-linguistic atlas of the indigenous peoples of Latin America,³⁹ and the organization of a training programme in intercultural and bilingual education for Andean countries. Mexico integrated indicators specific to indigenous peoples in its Millennium Development Goals progress report and new data from the 2010 census is to be used as a basis for improving public policies related to indigenous peoples.⁴⁰ Ecuador has established an institutional framework at the highest level of the State to ensure the participation of all people, including indigenous peoples, in the formulation, evaluation, and monitoring of policies and programmes to promote and protect their rights as recognized in the new Constitution adopted in September 2008.⁴¹ It has also created the Department of Intercultural Dialogue to promote inclusive education. To assist in capacity-building, the Latin American and Caribbean Indigenous and Local Community Capacity-building Workshop on the Convention on Biological Diversity was held in Guatemala in March 2010.

43. Some countries have enacted initiatives aimed at the social integration of ethnic and other excluded groups. For example, the Viet Nam Socio-economic Development Programme for the most Vulnerable Communes in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas⁴² targets ethnic minorities in communities and villages in geographically remote and isolated areas to participate in mainstream economic activities. The programme aims to meet a set of specific, measurable and outcome-oriented objectives through various activities, such as skills and vocational training, infrastructure development, capacity-building of local communities, and improving access to basic social services.⁴³

Migrants

44. In Western Asia, in particular in the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council,⁴⁴ large numbers of labour migrants are employed mostly in informal sectors of the economy. Countries in Western Asia are showing progress in aligning their national legislation and policies on labour mobility to international standards so as to secure the rights of migrants. Although full social integration of foreign

³⁸ With the participation of the International Labour Organization, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur.

³⁹ ATLAS sociolingüístico de pueblos indígenas en América Latina, vol. 1 and vol. 2, published by the United Nations Children's Fund, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation and the Foundation for Education in the Contexts of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism (FUNPROEIB Andes) (2009).

⁴⁰ Statement by the representative of Mexico at the ninth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (April 2010).

⁴¹ Statement by the representative of Ecuador at the ninth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (April 2010).

⁴² Also known as Programme 135.

⁴³ See <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2009/Ghana/Quan.pdf>.

⁴⁴ The States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

migrants into the host societies is not an objective, protection of their rights and even their inclusion in social protection schemes is moving forward.

45. Qatar has made considerable legislative and institutional efforts in promoting and protecting the rights of expatriate workers. In addition to signing bilateral agreements with countries of origin to protect the rights of migrant workers, the 2004 Labour Code guarantees workers a set of rights and privileges, protection from occupational hazards, compensation for injuries at work, and the right to voluntarily terminate their contracts and to be compensated for their work. A labour inspection unit within the Ministry of Labour is entrusted with dealing with discrimination against expatriate workers and two special courts have been established to resolve expatriate labour disputes.⁴⁴ To improve the working and living conditions of migrant workers, the United Arab Emirates issued a series of measures relating to the creation of suitable housing for workers; the provision of adequate means of transport and the establishment of federal tribunals to deal with labour disputes. In addition, workers receive a health card to facilitate their access to health services.

46. In Saudi Arabia several measures have been enacted to safeguard the rights of migrant workers, among them the Council of Ministers' Decision regulating relations between migrant workers and their employers, which prohibits the retention of migrant workers' passports by their employers and promulgates that migrant workers may access public services.⁴⁵ More recent national initiatives include the unified contracts for domestic workers in Lebanon; the transfer of the sponsorship responsibility from the employer to a State agency in Bahrain; and self-sponsored work visas for certain professionals in Kuwait. These initiatives are considered good practices in mitigating the challenges of social integration for labour migrants.⁴⁶

B. Social integration through broad-based participation

47. Several countries have taken initiatives in support of broader participation of citizens and communities in the design, monitoring and implementation of social policies.

48. The Government of Mozambique has set up a network of consultative Provincial Development Observatories to strengthen citizens' participation in regional planning and budgetary processes as an instrument to assist the Ministry of Planning and Development in monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty.⁴⁷

49. To improve social integration and participation of women, a number of African countries have used quota mechanisms to increase the representation of women in Parliament. In 2003 Rwanda introduced a quota of 30 per cent of seats in Parliament to be reserved for women. Rwanda has far exceeded the quota and has the highest number of women in the lower house of the Parliament of any region, reaching

⁴⁵ See A/HRC/WG.6/4/SAU/1.

⁴⁶ International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Arab Labour Organization, *Intra-regional Labour Mobility in the Arab World*, IOM (2010).

⁴⁷ See Antonio Alberta da Silva Francisco and Konrad Matter, "Poverty observatory in Mozambique", Southern African Regional Poverty Network. Available at <http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0002581/index.php>.

56.3 per cent in 2008. In 2000, the United Republic of Tanzania set a quota of 20 per cent of seats to be allocated to women in all political parties based on the proportional number of parliamentary seats won in an election. In 2008, the percentage of women in Parliament surpassed 30 per cent. In Uganda, the Government seeks to rectify exclusion and inequalities in society through the quota mechanism, targeting four specific groups: women, workers, youth and persons with disabilities. Despite only setting a quota of 17 per cent of the reserved seats, the number of women in the Ugandan Parliament reached 30.7 per cent in 2008. The quotas for youth (five seats) and persons with disabilities (five seats) have been fulfilled as well.¹

50. In Lebanon, a national consultation mechanism among the government, civil society and persons with disabilities led to the formation of the national committee for the disabled, which constitutes the regulatory authority in all matters related to the situation, rights and protection of persons with disabilities. The programme for guaranteeing the rights of the disabled helped in moving the common approach to disability from a care- to a rights-based approach.

51. In recent years, the Parliament of Serbia has provided for expanded engagement of civil society in law-making through public hearings and debate. This has led to the adoption of a number of national strategies and laws promoting social inclusion, including a gender equality strategy, a youth strategy and a national Roma strategy, as well as a law on the professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.⁴⁸

52. In October 2010, the Council of Europe launched the Action Plan for Social Cohesion, designed to involve citizens in setting priorities at national, regional and local levels. The plan seeks to address how society can be protected from negative trends and how to sustain social justice in a context of limited resources and how to ensure equity between generations.⁴⁹

C. Exchange of views and experiences on good policies and practices for social integration

53. The first Asian regional workshop on social assistance and conditional cash transfers²¹ was held at the Asian Development Bank (Manila, 2009) to gather social assistance experiences and advance the operational agenda for social protection in Asia and the Pacific. Policymakers and practitioners from the Asian Development Bank, Governments, development partners, research institutes and civil society organizations shared their views and experiences on social assistance and its modalities, with particular focus on the poor and vulnerable populations.

54. The Pacific Conference on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis (Vanuatu, 2010) was held to develop effective policy measures and practical responses to support Pacific countries in alleviating the adverse effects of the global

⁴⁸ See <http://www.UNECE.org/gender/documents/Beijing+15/Serbia.pdf>; see also http://www.ngoserbia.com/res/National_Youth_Strategy.pdf and <http://www.romadecade.org/files/downloads/Decade%20Documents/Serbia%20Decade%20Presidency%20Program.pdf>.

⁴⁹ See http://www.coe.int/t/DG3/default_en.asp.

economic crisis, with the objective of reducing vulnerability and building sustained resilience.⁵⁰

55. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) shared with Latin American and Caribbean Governments its findings on conditional cash transfer programmes through recurrent publications such as *Social Panorama of Latin America*,⁵¹ as well as institutional reports such as *Time for equality: closing gaps, opening trails*, presented at the thirty-third session of ECLAC. National and international seminars were also held in Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua and technical assistance was provided to the Ministry for Social Development of Panama and the Ministry of Development Planning of Bolivia. Furthermore, ECLAC has implemented an online social programmes database to monitor the characteristics and impacts of conditional cash transfer programmes, currently being validated by technical staff within Governments.

56. The European Commission and the Council of the National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion issue the annual Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion.⁵² The Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Inclusion facilitates mutual learning among member States of the European Union through the exchange of good policies and practices on combating poverty and social exclusion, reforming their social welfare systems and tackling the challenges posed by demographic changes. The Open Method of Coordination has also provided the framework for the joint monitoring of the social impact of the crisis.⁵³

57. The recently launched Inter-American Social Protection Network: Exchanging Experiences, Expanding Opportunities forms a “community of practice for national social development ministries and agencies, in collaboration with international organizations, private sector and academia, to promote the exchange and transfer of experiences and knowledge on social protection”.⁵⁴ It serves as a mechanism for the exchange of best practices in social protection and aims to assemble a portfolio of social protection programmes to match supply and demand of successful strategies and methodologies.

58. To bridge the gap in transferring policy to practice, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education launched in October 2010 a website on the theme “Inclusive Education in Action”, which provides examples of concrete actions taken based on the Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education,⁵⁵ developed by UNESCO.

⁵⁰ See http://vanuatu2010.un.org/fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/GEC_Conference_Outcomes_Document_final.pdf.

⁵¹ In particular, the 2009 edition.

⁵² See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=757&langId=en>.

⁵³ See EU Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2010). Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=757&langId=en>.

⁵⁴ See <http://www.socialprotectionnet.org/english/index-1.html>.

⁵⁵ See <http://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org/iea/index.php?menuid=47>.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

59. The review of good policies and practices in the area of social integration leads to several main conclusions. First, country experiences demonstrate that social protection programmes have been increasingly seen as an effective means to reduce poverty, inequality and social exclusion, as well as to increase income-generating opportunities and promote social integration. They improve health outcomes and nutrition, school attendance and educational outcomes, and reduce child labour.⁶ They allow for a more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth and, therefore, are widely considered as essential tools for promoting social inclusion and achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. They also tend to promote social cohesion, citizenship and democracy. It has been further acknowledged that, in order to be more effective, such programmes should be accompanied by strong efforts to promote universal access to social services.

60. Many social integration policies and programmes target specific social groups and aim at improving their livelihood and status in society. In this context, various Governments consider improving employability and access to employment for vulnerable groups, including youth and women, as important tools in promoting social integration and inclusion.

61. In addition, some of the social integration policies and programmes have been incorporated into national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies. Efforts have also been made to promote effective participation of people in civic, social, economic and political activities. Such efforts are considered essential for the promotion of social inclusion. Engaging multiple stakeholders in public policymaking has also been important to enhancing the transparency, accountability and ownership of the development process.

62. Broad-based participation of all citizens in the social, cultural and political life of a society is indispensable for social integration. Persistent prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination prevent full participation and remain among the major challenges to social integration. Although many countries have adopted or amended their legislation to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups and ensure their inclusion, the implementation of these provisions has been frequently hampered by a weak institutional capacity for both programme delivery and outreach, as well as insufficient regulatory frameworks.

63. In conclusion, it can be observed that, despite the limitations and shortcomings of some social integration strategies and many challenges remaining in some regions, inclusive national development strategies and appropriate policies and approaches have proven to be effective in advancing social integration and social development. Such good policies and practices and lessons learned provide useful knowledge for the design and implementation of effective future interventions. These successful national experiences should be widely shared, so that policymakers and other relevant stakeholders at national and international levels can replicate or scale them up to accelerate progress towards creating “a society for all”.

B. Recommendations

64. Governments are encouraged to develop and implement policies and programmes for promoting social integration and incorporate them into national policies and development strategies.

65. Governments should continue to strengthen policies and interventions targeting specific social groups, while mainstreaming social integration and inclusion objectives in all policies and programmes.

66. Governments may consider adopting appropriate social protection programmes as part of a comprehensive social protection strategy aimed at reducing inequality and social exclusion.

67. Governments should promote universal access to basic social services as a means to advancing social integration.

68. Governments should promote policies and strategies for achieving full employment and decent work that foster the social integration of vulnerable groups and promote gender equality.

69. Governments should increase participation of citizens and communities in the planning and implementation of social integration policies and strategies, reduce barriers to people's participation and strengthen institutional mechanisms to promote their participation.

70. Governments may consider systematic exchange of good practices in social integration.
