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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: promoting empowerment of people in achieving
poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and
decent work for all**

Statement submitted by Ma'arij Foundation for Peace and Development, 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

In today's interconnected and interdependent world, it is crucial to formulate poverty eradication and full employment strategies for different groups of countries and benefit from the interconnections of States and solutions, interconnections that include not only relationships between actors, but also the cause-and-effect relationships of various processes and events. At the same time, the world remains diverse. Accordingly, while reviewing any global issue, we will take into account both diversity and interconnections. Looking at poverty and employment, we will first examine different groups of countries, according to their level of their development, and different related problems and the effects thereof, before considering possible solutions to the problems.

According to the International Labour Organization, working poverty has continued to decrease, but at a slower pace than before the crisis. There are still some 870 million workers living with their families on less than \$2 per person per day, of which nearly 400 million are living in extreme poverty. A further 660 million workers are living just above the poverty line and are at high risk of falling back.

People in poverty face financial and social problems as they become subject to discrimination and humiliation. The interconnection of these problems causes additional difficulties. We must therefore take steps that will lead to full employment in each country, benefiting from the interdependence of States and related processes. In the present statement, we will:

- (a) Examine three groups of countries (developed countries, countries with economies in transition and developing countries) with regard to their poverty eradication and employment situations, concentrating on the search for possible solutions;
- (b) Consider possible interconnections between the above-mentioned solutions and their results;
- (c) Examine the influence of the problems on poverty and employment;
- (d) Make recommendations based on our findings.

Developed countries

Even developed countries face the problem of poverty and unemployment. Moreover, according to the *World of Work Report 2012: Better Jobs for a Better Economy*, published by the International Labour Organization and the International Institute for Labour Studies, poverty levels have not reduced significantly in developed economies. In fact, poverty rates dropped in 11 of 36 countries, rose in 17 and remained essentially unchanged in 8.

The root causes of poverty in developed countries are low pay, youth unemployment, non-income inequality (especially relating to health-care systems) and inequality in access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises. The continuous influence of the financial crisis is another significant difficulty.

There is obviously no solution to all problems that will work for all countries. We therefore call for a number of measures to be taken, such as:

- (a) Cooperation in tackling the issues, including joint research, projects and action;
- (b) Examination and adaptation of best practice;
- (c) Examination of trends;
- (d) Creation of jobs for youth in governmental and international projects;
- (e) Review of salary systems;
- (f) Review of legal issues regarding small and medium-sized enterprises.

The outcome of these measures would be possible new strategies to tackle poverty and unemployment, especially intergenerational poverty, the creation of new jobs and a possible positive influence on less-developed countries through international projects.

Countries with economies in transition

The main causes of poverty in countries with economies in transition are unemployment, inflation and a lack of State activities in this regard. Insufficient food and clothing, poor housing, limited access to utilities, poorer health and less access to health care, social exclusion and psychological suffering are associated with poverty. Especially vulnerable to poverty are households in remote rural areas, mostly comprising ethnic minorities, children, women and single older persons. A significant issue in such countries is the long-term poor.

Thus, together with the measures suggested for developed countries, countries with economies in transition should concentrate on ensuring social sustainability, improving the political situation, eradicating internal conflict and improving the situation with regard to crime. Other possible ways of tackling poverty and unemployment are:

- (a) Developing an organized social society and increasing its influence in the decision-making process;
- (b) Improving access to and the quality of education and training;
- (c) Strengthening labour market policies.

Taking such measures together will tackle the problems from various angles, including the social, economic and political spheres, and will contribute to strengthening the relationships between countries of the same group and other groups.

Developing countries

Developing countries are fighting a significant battle in their efforts to combat poverty. According to the *World of Work Report 2012: Better Jobs for a Better Economy*, national poverty rates declined in about three quarters of developing countries, particularly those that put in place significant social policies. On the other hand, poverty rates increased or remained unchanged in 25 of 36 developed economies as labour markets deteriorated and austerity measures took their toll.

Economic growth in developing countries will contribute to significantly reducing poverty, especially if income inequality is also tackled. Another way of

eradicating poverty is to improve social care systems. In this regard, developing countries should carefully exchange and study best practice, consider trends and improve their political situation, in addition to giving opportunities for a social society to develop.

The following steps might be taken to eradicate poverty in developing countries:

- (a) International development projects with foreign governmental and private investment;
- (b) Governmental projects for youth employment;
- (c) Cooperation between countries, including joint projects and research;
- (d) Improvement of conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- (e) Methods to eradicate income inequality;
- (f) Research and financial support by international organizations;
- (g) International poverty reduction programmes in developing countries, with a significant role therein for non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

These measures would tackle the problem from different angles and involve various stakeholders at the regional and international levels.

Recommendations

Poverty and unemployment, being a complex problem with various interconnected factors and stakeholders, require multifaceted solutions. Having reviewed the problems in three groups of countries, we suggest the following interdependent measures:

- (a) Strengthening cooperation between countries to tackle problems in such forms as exchange of best practice, joint research into trends and joint development and anti-poverty projects that attract governmental and private investment;
- (b) Taking measures to tackle problems such as social inequality, political instability, lack of education and training and the challenging environment facing small and medium-sized enterprises, among others;
- (c) Special attention to and programmes aimed at poverty reduction in developing countries by international organizations;
- (d) Developing the involvement of NGOs in efforts to combat poverty all over the world and providing funding for NGO projects to tackle poverty and related problems.