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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 Peace Worldwide, 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

We know that empowerment of those living in poverty is both a critical driver and an important measure of poverty reduction. It is essential for bringing about the policies and investments needed to expand the economic opportunities of the poor, to promote pro-poor growth and to address the multiple dimensions of poverty. Poor women and men need to gain and exert influence over the political, economic and social processes that determine and, all too often, constrain their livelihood opportunities. Sustainable poverty reduction needs poor people to be both the agents and beneficiaries of economic growth — to directly participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes.

Summary

Poverty is one of the most challenging and lasting problems of the world. The world is making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, but it is uneven and too slow. Youth can play a very important role in any development programme. They are indeed invaluable resources to any nation because their fresh motivation, capabilities and innovativeness can act as a catalyst for achieving goals of excellence. Youth are “social and human capital” and therefore keeping and developing this invaluable resource is our main duty. Poverty is a challenging social problem which has lasted for numerous years and has affected human life. It seems that there should be a great focus on public empowerment in order to realize plans for the alleviation of poverty. In this regard, considering the young generation and their important role as a catalyst in development can be very helpful to the success of poverty eradication strategies because youth will shape the future in a better way. There is a need to promote persons with disabilities so that they can enjoy their rights completely in society and they will be able to participate in society.

A programme to support vulnerable women who experience domestic abuse or homelessness should be developed in every country by different organizations and by the Governments of the respective countries. This kind of programme will help women to develop knowledge, skills and abilities in order to increase their employability and income earning potential, find and maintain employment and increase their resources to reduce their vulnerability to poverty and abuse.

Serious challenges are faced by all low-skilled workers in today’s economy. Entry-level workers cannot easily advance out of poverty simply by staying on the job and moving up through seniority. Traditional routes to advancement for low-skilled workers, such as career ladders inside large firms and union-negotiated wages, are necessary.

Children are the future of any nation, and Peace Worldwide strongly supports investments in childcare programmes to improve the quality of the education of children at an early age. There should be an emphasis on reading proficiency at an early age. There is a strong need to build a solid start and improve the quality of childcare services. Also there is a need to invest in and promote programmes that provide training, scholarships and rewards for credit-based education.

Access to information is necessary because information is power and informed citizens are better equipped to take advantage of their rights and opportunities, exercise their rights and hold State and non-State actors accountable. There is a

strong need to encourage people to work together, organize and mobilize resources to solve problems of common interest.

Recommendations

Recommendations include:

- (a) Enable persons with disabilities to participate fully in society;
 - (b) Create an enhanced justice system that supports vulnerable people;
 - (c) Improve access to necessities for those who are most vulnerable to poverty;
 - (d) Increase youth involvement in development processes and political activities;
 - (e) Reduce barriers to work and create greater support for low income workers;
 - (f) Develop and expand employment skills programmes for vulnerable groups whose needs are not being met;
 - (g) Strengthen early learning and childcare systems;
 - (h) Introduce childcare and other programmes for low income workers that can help workers stay on the job longer;
 - (i) Develop economic development strategies that promote the creation of higher-quality jobs.
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