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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 UDISHA, 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

Development of Employable Skills: A key strategy for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development

Udisha, A Society for Education, Employment and Sustainable Development

Objective and purpose of statement:

One of the major challenges faced by the world today is poverty. It is a disease that has been plaguing the planet from time immemorial. It is a vicious circle that has been traversing through generations of different families. As a result of the high rate of unemployment, it has become endemic and the major characteristic of the developing and underdeveloped countries of the world. Although the level and magnitude of poverty and unemployment has been observed to be different within and across nations, it still remains the major obstacle to the success in the struggle for the optimum utilisation of human resources for both social and economic development of nations.

Poverty is a multi-dimensional problem that cannot be solved without making its subjects and the ones most affected by it self-sustaining. In consonance with the agenda of this Commission — “Eradication of poverty and ensuring sustainable development for all”, this statement proposes the idea of providing skills to youth to encourage them to become self-sustaining. For instance, improving access to the labour market in the informal economy or agriculture, increases income and strengthens social networks. Such access can constitute a powerful tool for poverty reduction. Learning vocational skills helps to ensure food security and rural development, both of which are important when fighting poverty. Skills development strategies must look not only at households but also at communities and territories, as local conditions are a key element.

There is also a need to differentiate between the different meanings of “poverty reduction”. Although concepts of poverty reduction are debatable, there could be three kinds of poverty reduction:

- Poverty alleviation — Alleviating the symptoms of poverty and/or reducing the severity of poverty without transforming people from “poor” to “non-poor”;
- Lifting people out of poverty — “Poverty reduction” in the true sense; reducing the numbers of poor people and/or transforming poor people into non-poor people;
- Poverty prevention — Enabling people to avoid falling into poverty by reducing their vulnerability.

The objective of this statement is to examine how youth employment skills initiatives of the Indian Government in can assist our populous country in eradicating poverty.

Overview of the issue:

According to United Nations Development Programme, as India moves towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals and reducing its poverty ratio,

the employability of its 350 million youth is critical. The skills challenge becomes acute for India considering that the country has a large portion of its population below 25 years of age. This young population can be transformed into a productive workforce providing the Indian economy a “Demographic Dividend”. Currently a major proportion of this population is not productively engaged in economic activities due to skills versus jobs requirement mismatch. The skills versus jobs mismatch often leads to economically inactive working age group people which not only impacts the economy, it also has serious consequences for the society at large. Social unrest such as insurgency witnessed in several areas of India should be heeded with a measure of urgency.

While recently launching the National Mission for Skill Development 2015, Indian Prime Minister acknowledged that India currently faces a severe shortage of well-trained, skilled workers. It is estimated that only 2.3% of the workforce in India has undergone formal skill training. The objective of the Mission is to rapidly scale up skill development efforts in India. This is done by creating an end-to-end, outcome focused implementation framework, which aligns demands of the employers for a well-trained skilled workforce with aspirations of Indian citizens for sustainable livelihoods.

Skills development results from the capacities that are acquired through different levels and types of education and training. But the translation of skills development into skills utilisation, and therefore poverty reduction and/or growth, is dependent on many factors, including good quality education/training and the presence of a supportive environment.

As India moves to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and reduce the poverty ratio significantly, increasing the employability of the country’s 350 million youth is critical. A partnership between the United Nations Development Programme and the Government of Rajasthan in India is helping equip the poorest and most marginalised with the skills necessary to participate in the country’s growth story.

The Rajasthan Mission on Livelihood represents an example of efforts by United Nations Development Programme to support state governments and partners in developing holistic approaches and models to strengthen existing livelihoods. The mission also identifies employment potential for the poor in emerging sectors. It has adopted a comprehensive strategy to help increase the employability of the country’s youth workforce and eradicate poverty. Thirty-two technical agencies in Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa bring professional and technical expertise to 24 grassroots organisations reaching out to nearly 110,000 disadvantaged households.

Challenges ahead:

Non-Government Organizations (NGO’s) play a very vital role to provide the untrained and underutilised manpower with employable skills and to enable them to earn their livelihood and help the nation in tackling ever-emerging economic challenges. For achieving this goal NGO’s have to join hands with the Government Agencies and other national and international organisations such as the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries and United Nations Development

Programme to help increase the employability of the country's youth and eradicate poverty.

Udisha has realised that education and employment are directly related to sustainable development. It is focusing on and trying to supplement the governmental efforts for skill development by creating awareness, desire and skill (especially vocational) among children and youth. It has provided employment through free job-oriented training to hundreds of unemployed youth in the areas of computing, web design, beauty and health care, garment drafting, construction and security under the schemes of the Indian Government and Non-Government Organisations. The challenge before us is to equip men and women with essential skills and up-grading existing skill-sets to provide appropriate placement support, in tune with current market needs and demands. This will enable them to become gainfully employed or start their own enterprise and assist the government with eradicating poverty. We plan to seek support from National or State Skill Development Mission and agencies such as the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries and United Nations Development Programme for achieving this objective.

Conclusion:

We are confident and very optimistic that with the establishment of bodies like the National Council on Skill Development under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister, Mr Narinder Modi and support from organisations such as the Federation of India Chamber of Commerce and Industries and United Nations Development Programme, there would be convergence and co-ordination of skill development efforts across multiple stakeholders. Stakeholders including, central and state Ministries and Departments, private training providers, assessment agencies, industry bodies, Non-Government Organisations and workers in the skill landscape of the country. This would result in innovations in skills and focus on enhancing employability of socially and economically disadvantaged communities. The skilled manpower will not only be able to be gainfully employed for their livelihood but also participate in the state's efforts and growth story of eradicating poverty.
