



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

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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 International Committee for Peace and Reconciliation, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

Poverty may be understood as a condition in which a person or community lacks the basic need for minimum standard of living particularly as a result of persistent lack of income. A person can be pushed into a state of poverty by external circumstances. In that context a person is an innocent victim of the situation. Poverty is a pronounced deprivation of opportunities and affects the wellbeing of the person concerned. Different manifestations of poverty include: hunger, malnutrition, inadequate access to education, unhealthy living conditions, inadequate physical security, lack of participation in social activities and more. A person who has to struggle all the time for physical survival, cannot invest any time or resources to achieve higher qualities of life. Poverty thus becomes a function of diminished capability of people to live the kinds of life for which they aspire.

The economic aspect of poverty focuses on material needs and can be put into three categories: extreme, moderate and relative. Extreme poverty refers to a condition which is consistent over time and among countries. The World Bank defines extreme poverty as living on less than US \$1.25 per day per person. Moderate poverty is the state in which one can survive by meeting the basic need for the minimum standard of living but cannot meet the other requirements of life adequately. Relative poverty is viewed on social context and is a measure of economic distance between two individuals in a chosen domain. This is an indication of inequalities rather than material deprivation or hardship.

It is often argued that world has enough resources to lift everyone up from extreme poverty. Yet, extreme poverty persists. One oft quoted explanation is that there is no agreed upon mechanism to distribute resources to the deserving needy. Uncontrolled population growth is diminishing the resources by making poverty a fate accompli for many. Further, the poor people do not understand or heed to the need for education and savings. If they get any extra money from whatever source, they squander that money on immediate pleasure such as, food and drinks.

Luckily, a section of people acknowledges that the eradication of poverty is beneficial for all. If ignored, poverty like a contagious disease will also pull the rich down from their existing comfort zone. That does not imply that the poor should just accept their fate and wait for the rich to call for justice. They will have to work to remedy their tolls and transmit their hope to the next generation. Otherwise, the cycle of poverty will continue as the French philosopher Voltaire noted, "The comfort of the rich depends upon an abundant supply of the poor". Therefore, the goal of eradication of poverty must be addressed by gender. Because of existing social structures, physical capabilities and mental aptitudes based on gender poverty affects men and women differently. Poor women suffer disproportionately higher trauma than men. Therefore, any quest for solution to poverty must be addressed separately for men and women.

Natural disasters, civil wars, diseases and extremism can cause forced migration putting some people in a state of helplessness. These are the people who deserve all the help to get back to their normal state of life as long as they are willing to help themselves.

Of the more than 50 million refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the world, 80 percent are women and children. For IDPs the average length of displacement is seventeen years. Given these statistics, it is

imperative to focus on the priorities of women and girls affected by forced displacement and migration.

Women's health issues are an important factor to fight poverty. An unhealthy poor mother gives birth to unhealthy poor babies. If these babies are not taken care of at birth, they will only add to the statistics of the poor people. Therefore, the empowerment of women in the decision making process is a very important component in the whole discussion. Women must be included in all decision making processes which affect the wellbeing of all members of the society. It is encouraging to note that women empowerment is slowly getting recognition in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Micro credit providers and women's savings groups aim both to reduce income inequality and poverty. By doing this they play a significant role in women's empowerment.

Another important vehicle by which one can move from the lowest rung of the ladder of poverty to a higher one is education. It is a very important weapon to fight poverty. As different weapons are needed to fight different obstacles so different types of education must be offered to poverty stricken people based on their circumstances and requirements to fight poverty. Women have distinct role in the family so their skill requirement may be different from men for the betterment of the society and the community. In essence innovation, commitment, setting goals and visionary leadership can control poverty from spreading. Multiple partners working together can accelerate the progress in mitigating extreme poverty.

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According to recent finding by Australia-based Walk Free Organization, slavery is no longer a bygone issue. These slaves live in extreme poverty and are used for the comfort and earning money for their masters. Any poverty eradication program must include the emancipation and rehabilitations of these slaves.

Yet, there is another side of the picture. Given the opportunities some poor people, both men and women, will not take advantage of all the available opportunities. They would always expect other members of society to take care of them. Thus, they want to live like parasites. This type of self-inflicted poverty is a disease and there is no immediate cure for this disease. These people shall be put under quarantine so that the disease cannot spread among others associated with them.

The poverty eradication program can only work if the poor can be motivated to play their due role. If a poor person in poverty ignores all the calls for liberation and is determined to live inside a prison of poverty, she or he can never be liberated even if the walls of the prison are abolished. Only the poor and rich, men and women working together for their mutual benefit can send poverty in exile.