



## 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 Association Malienne de Savoir Construire (A.M.S.C.), 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**

### **Introduction**

The consequences of poverty often reinforce its complex causes, thus exacerbating the problem. Studies have found that the main causes were the following:

- Insufficient access to employment opportunities
- Lack of means of production, such as land and capital, and almost non-existent access to credit for the poor, even for small amounts
- Insufficient access to the means to support rural development in poor areas
- Insufficient access to markets where the poor could sell goods and services
- Insufficient access to assistance for those living on the margins or victims of transitional poverty
- Lack of involvement of the poor in the design of development programmes
- Short supply of human capital

### **Environmental causes**

- Destruction of natural resources, leading to environmental degradation and declining productivity. There is a close link between rural poverty and environmental degradation. Indeed, the degradation of resources, such as land and forests, and such things as a shortage of freshwater deprive the population of basic resources for development.
- Efforts to identify populations affected by poverty and to measure it sometimes overshadow the fact that poverty is too complex to be reduced to a single facet of human existence.
- Most countries have adopted the practice of setting a poverty line based on levels of income or consumption. While this approach highlights an important aspect of poverty, it gives an incomplete vision of the multiple phenomena capable of destroying human lives.
- One individual may enjoy good health and live a relatively long time, but be illiterate and thus deprived of access to knowledge and contact and relationships with others. Another might know how to read and write, having received a good education, but be doomed to die prematurely because of epidemiological conditions or physical predisposition. Yet others may be deprived of important decision-making powers in events affecting their lives. In none of these three cases can income levels alone paint a fair picture of deprivation.

### **Growth**

- The distribution of growth is critical, since it determines which social groups benefit from job creation and rising incomes. By focusing on the expansion of agriculture, remote and poor areas and slums, it should be possible to provide a wider range of groups, including the poor, with access to growth.
- Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa cannot be expected to diminish without greater determination on the part of national authorities and a greater commitment to the programmes aimed at achieving this objective. However, only a few Governments in the region (one quarter of the total) have explicitly made poverty reduction a primary government goal in the programmes carried out in cooperation with the World Bank.

**Poverty eradication strategies**

- Poverty eradication requires listening to the voices of the poor and marginalized; it requires the redistribution of global wealth. We must understand that young people are not the future, but the present! We should not tell young people what they must do, but show them what they can do.
- There must be debt relief for poor countries. Because they have been bearing financial burdens for years, and will never be able to recover sufficiently to escape from that situation.
- When it comes to Africa, poverty eradication requires combating ignorance and corruption. And success in combating these two scourges needs World Bank support for civil society. The education sector requires support to combat the spread of ignorance in Africa and to put an end to social inequality and discrimination.

**Conclusions**

- Africans must lead the anti-poverty movement and donors must accept this and assist them in their efforts.
- The fact that many African Governments have not made poverty reduction their central objective is a major problem. Donors, including the World Bank, are partially to blame in this regard because they agree to make loans even when Governments have little interest in combating poverty.
- All stakeholders must be involved if the problems and needs of the poor are to be understood and action is to be taken to improve their situation.
- Indeed, studies stress that poverty reduction is a worthwhile economic and political goal. It must therefore lie at the heart of any economic and social development strategy. Above all, we must believe in poverty eradication in order for it to be possible.

**Recommendations**

To address these vulnerabilities and enhance its operational focus on poverty reduction, the World Bank must implement four major changes:

- Focus clearly and unambiguously on growth and poverty reduction, including the development of human capital.
  - Put issues related to poverty, gender equality and the environment at the heart of macroeconomic and sectoral strategies instead of treating them as outliers.
  - Systematically monitor poverty in all countries receiving World Bank loans.
  - Make management and workers responsible for the involvement of all stakeholders in the development of aid strategies and the achievement of the poverty reduction goals set by the World Bank.
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