



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
1 December 2017

Original: English

Commission for Social Development

Fifty-sixth session

31 January–7 February 2018

**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 the Asociación Civil Hecho por Nosotros, 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

I. Introduction

Hecho por Nosotros welcomes the 56th session of Commission for Social Development priority theme “Strategies for poverty eradication to achieve sustainable development for all”, and urges the Commission to expand on advancing sustainable textile industry. Hecho por Nosotros has witnessed how textile and clothing industry provides a platform to address various sustainable development themes - especially tackling poverty, health, environmental and responsible consumerism goals. Truly global industry, valued at trillions of USD, this industry can provide integrated solutions for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development worldwide.

II. Textile Industry and Poverty

The textile industry accounts for the major part of manufacturing production, employment, and trade in many developing countries. It is the typical starter industry for countries entering global trade. It is also very labour-intensive, where still in the industry the majority of manufacturing and finishing is still done by workers, not assembled in production lines. It is also income relief for many poor people living in urban settlements, and people from rural areas seeking jobs in cities to offer living and job. Often the garment industry is seen to help to lift people from poverty, offering employment opportunities including entry-level jobs for unskilled labour and illegal workforce. Even the industry has proven to help developing countries take part to international business, and offer employment for people with low skills and in vulnerable status, saying yes to the question about the industry helping lift people from poverty is not that simple.

III. Securing Measures Needed to Tackle Poverty in Textile Industry

To secure fair and just wages to provide at least a living wage and help to tackle poverty, strong policy measures are needed — and most importantly followed. Governments can set the absolute minimum by minimum wages, and companies can set code of conducts to secure just payment for their workers.

Implementation of international labour and human rights conventions securing the fundamental rights and standards at the national level is crucial. Vulnerable groups, including migrants, require particular attention to ensure that their rights are protected and working conditions improved. Transparency of the production chain is essential to be able to address poverty and to understand what kind of actions are needed at policy level, from companies, and from consumers. Some of the concrete actions helping to eradicate poverty are:

- Support building long term, mutually trusting relationships with suppliers, working together with all involved in textile value chains to understand the drivers of prevailing wage levels and how they can be influenced
- Consult with workers/managers to calculate living wage levels for the industry
- Advocate for mechanisms to set national minimum wages that equate to living wages
- Ensure cost of living wages are accommodated throughout the value chain and if necessary in product price
- Improve workers’ collective bargaining power and ensure their right to freedom of association is respected

- Incentivise employers to pay living wages eg. by increasing orders to those suppliers
- Improve productivity and efficiency to enable the value chain to accommodate wage growth
- Mitigate the impact of wage increases on unemployment or other unintended consequences in your supply chains
- Join forces with sustainability initiatives, companies, NGOs and trade unions, to share lessons on working towards living wages

IV. Recommendations

We call the Member States of the Commission to develop programs to help textile workers, artisans, from rural areas to reach national and international markets, valuing traditional textile culture, training programmes to develop these women's skills even further. Only by working together, seeing the interrelations between sustainable development goals, we can truly fight poverty and advance Agenda 2030.
