



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

#### Fifty-second session

11-21 February 2014

**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 the World Youth Alliance, a non-governmental organization in special 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**

### **Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all**

The World Youth Alliance, a global coalition of young people promoting the dignity of the human person in policy, education and culture, welcomes the priority theme for the fifty-second session of the Commission for Social Development, “Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all”.

#### **Foundation of human dignity**

People cannot be empowered unless empowerment efforts are centred on an understanding of the dignity of the human being. It is the intrinsic worth of the human being that provides the basis on which to found policies and laws that create conditions under which human beings can flourish. Without such a foundation, human rights are articulated and enforced, based upon the subjective preferences of those in power, thus undermining the entire human rights project and leading to violations of human rights.

#### **Poverty eradication**

The elimination of poverty, which is the greatest challenge to sustainable development, enables people to live in conditions in which they can thrive. Poverty eradication occurs by educating and investing in human beings and enabling their creativity and natural capacities to develop and flourish. The human being is the Earth’s greatest resource. Once freed from poverty, a person has an immeasurable capacity to innovate and contribute to development. People must have access to the resources that they need to utilize their ingenuity and to make the best decisions for themselves. Such resources include access to education, health care and skills training. The State is responsible for good governance and curtailment of corruption and ensuring that conditions exist for human beings to bring themselves out of poverty and flourish in accordance with their intrinsic dignity.

#### **Social integration**

Social integration, an organic process whereby all members of society live and work together for the common good, requires mutual respect for the diversity of cultures and traditions that make up the fabric of human society. Such respect cannot be forced by Governments or the international community, but must occur because of a profound understanding of the dignity of each and every human being and a desire to act in solidarity with one another. Solidarity is essentially the foundation for social integration.

#### **Full employment and decent work for all**

Full employment and decent work for all are only possible if people have access to basic health care, education, nutrition, clean water and sanitation. Without these necessities, a minor sickness may turn into a chronic illness that keeps a person, and even a family member who can serve as a caretaker, from working. A child with poor nutrition and unclean drinking water is likelier to become ill and be

chronically absent from school, possibly resulting in exclusion from the formal education system over time and difficulties, therefore, in finding employment.

Full employment for parents removes the temptation to send young children to work. While children in many parts of the world contribute to the economic well-being of their households, children, especially girls, must still have full access to primary and secondary education. Further, decent work implies a proper understanding of the dignity of the human person since indecent work inherently violates human dignity. Laws and policies must respect informal caregivers and those who work within the home as well as those who participate in the formal economy.

### **The family**

In addressing the priority theme, and in the light of the International Year of the Family, the World Youth Alliance would like to highlight the importance of supporting the family in empowering people. Social integration and poverty eradication require strong families who take seriously their duties and responsibilities in caring for their members and building intergenerational solidarity. Families sustain society and give life to the next generation. As the fundamental unit of society, the family ensures the sustainability of civilization and culture. It takes on essential tasks in the care of all, especially the weakest and most vulnerable. At its best, the family exemplifies intergenerational solidarity and its failure has tragic consequences for its members, particularly for children, and increasingly for older persons. It is in the family where a person first experiences solidarity and a model for social integration. An intact, supported family also is less likely to experience poverty.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society. The determination that the family is the fundamental group unit of society necessitates the support and protection of the State, which must recognize the key role of the family in social integration and the eradication of poverty. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society because it is the place where children are nurtured and raised, thus ensuring the future of society and of the State. Support for the family, because of its importance with regard to social functioning as well as the care and well-being of children, the aged and the most vulnerable, should be provided at the political and the cultural levels in order to eradicate poverty and achieve social integration.

### **Youth**

The World Youth Alliance, as a coalition of young people from both developed and developing nations working in solidarity, also wishes to recognize the value of youth in achieving poverty eradication and social integration. The potential of youth is immeasurable, and investment in young people will produce equally immeasurable returns. In many countries of the world, particularly in the developing world, there is a youth majority with the creative potential to transform society.

As a consequence of poverty and the associated absences of adequate health care, education and employment opportunities, much of the creative potential of young people is lost. Today, millions of adolescents, particularly girls, face the prospect of incomplete education, which increases their chances of living in poverty and of contracting infectious diseases. Youth are disproportionately burdened by economic problems, particularly unemployment. Access to educational opportunities and skills training is thus essential to provide them with what they need to succeed.

Improvements in basic health care will also reduce the care-giving responsibilities of many young people, particularly in the developing world, and prevent interruptions in their formal education.

The strength of the family is of primary importance to youth because it influences the way in which they will respond to issues and difficulties in their lives. The encouragement and love that young people experience in family life are directly related to how well they do in school and consequently have an impact on their employment opportunities. Therefore, support for the family is essential in recognizing and promoting the dignity of young people, especially as they relate to poverty eradication.

Young people are also at the heart of social integration. They are the drivers of the intergenerational solidarity that is needed so desperately in both the developed and the developing world. In order to support them and encourage them in leading the way to integration based on solidarity, we need to first support their families, where young people first learn about the dignity of the human person and social integration.

### **Conclusion**

The World Youth Alliance asserts that poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all are possible only through an understanding of the dignity of the human person, recognition of the importance of families and empowerment of youth to achieve their potential. The World Youth Alliance calls on States to prioritize education, health care, nutrition, clean water and sanitation in their funding and policy efforts since these are the basic necessities for healthy and productive lives.

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