

## **Commission for Social Development**

### **Introductory Statement**

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to address the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development. The Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Sha Zukang, spoke to the overriding goals of this session and in particular its priority theme of social integration. I, therefore, will focus my remarks on introducing the reports of the Secretary-General under consideration before the Commission.

I would like to first draw your attention to item **3 (a)** of the provisional agenda on “**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: social integration**” and the report of the Secretary-General entitled “**Promoting social integration**”, contained in document **E/CN.5/2010/2**.

The report re-emphasizes that social integration is central to fighting poverty and unemployment and creating a society for all, which is the ultimate goal of development.

It begins by reviewing various approaches to promoting social, civil and economic participation as a way to advance social integration. Next it highlights some regional and national priorities and gives examples of evaluation frameworks of social inclusion. Further, the report asserts that redistributive, anti-

discriminatory and participatory policies promoting inclusion through empowerment are indispensable for social integration.

Measures aimed at ensuring access to basic services are a prerequisite for social inclusion while combating discrimination and removing barriers to equal opportunities are both a matter of social justice and economic efficiency. Policies promoting participation, such as building the capacity of local governments, support for civic engagement institutions and investment in active and informed citizenship are all central to building more cohesive societies.

The report recommends that Governments pursue social integration policies in a coordinated, accountable and transparent manner. It calls for urgent action at the normative level to design policies that comply with human rights. Distinct institutions proficient at developing and implementing social integration policies may need to be created to carry out this task.

At the programmatic level, specific policies to promote integration of excluded individuals and groups must be carried out. Social integration would not be possible without civic engagement and broad-based participation in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of socially-inclusive policies. In this context, the report recommends developing national evaluation frameworks for social integration with group-specific indicators. The importance of continuous implementation of group-specific mandates is underlined as well.

Equally important to advancing social integration is access to quality education, including citizenship education and respect for cultural diversity. Indeed the provision of universal basic services in the area of education, health and,

increasingly social protection should be seen as means of fighting poverty and exclusion and promoting social integration. As for social protection, the report advocates putting in place a basic social protection floor for all.

At the international level, the report recommends enhancing the exchange of experiences and good practices in promoting social integration.

Let me now turn to report of the Secretary-General on “**Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development**”, contained in document **E/CN.5/2010/3**.

The report examines progress in implementing the social dimensions of NEPAD and assesses the impact on social development of the converging global crises that have affected both developed and developing countries. These include the food and energy crises of 2007-08, the current global financial and economic crisis, and the ongoing impacts of climate change.

The report underscores that Africa is not spared from the effects of the slowdown in the global economy. Gains in well-being that had been made as a result of improved economic performance are likely to be lost, undoing advances made over the last decade in key social sectors such as health and education. For Africa, adverse social consequences are likely to remain long after the recovery gathers pace in advanced economies. The lack of social protection programmes to offset the negative impact of a global recession on individuals and families will likely compound the situation, with the working poor and other vulnerable groups bearing the brunt of the global crisis.

The report concludes with a set of recommendations that underscore the importance of elevating and promoting Africa's social development agenda. In particular, the report notes that African countries should continue to integrate and mainstream NEPAD priorities into national development plans to ensure that they bear the greatest responsibility for their own development. They should also continue to strengthen efforts aimed at enhancing human capabilities and institutional capacity for effective and efficient programme conceptualization and implementation. These efforts should be enhanced through sharing of North-South and South-South regional experiences and best practices.

To effectively manage the process of development as envisioned by NEPAD, the report notes that African countries need to strengthen institutions that address a broad set of policies or tasks and not focus on strengthening highly restrained, market-oriented institutions. Africa's development partners should continue to integrate NEPAD priorities, values and principles into their development assistance programmes. In addition, African countries and their development partners should place people at the centre of development efforts as well as secure core investment spending in health, education, and social protection to limit the threats of the global slowdown on key social sectors.

Next, I wish to draw the Committee's attention to item **3 (b)** of the provisional agenda on **“Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups”** and to the report of the Secretary-General entitled **“Further implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002”**, contained in document **E/CN.5/2010/4**.

The report presents the views of Member States on mechanisms for improving the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and options for future modalities for the review and appraisal process. The report draws upon evidence presented to the forty-seventh session of the Commission showing that major commonalities exist between Member States on issues of ageing at the national level, including: sustainable systems of social security; participation of older persons in the labour market; the growing demand for quality and accessible health and long-term care; and the rights and participation of older persons in society.

In addition, the report includes responses to a Note Verbale sent to Member States in 2009 in which they expressed their continuing support for the eleven central themes of the Madrid Plan of Action as a basis for action, with emphasis on the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons and the ten additional themes that support this objective. Member States reacted positively to a suggestion to focus on the rights dimension of ageing. However, different viewpoints were expressed on the framework to be used for pursuing these issues, as well as the need for further discussion and exchange of ideas on the matter.

Regarding the modalities for the next review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan, the majority of Member States were in favour of continuing with the previous participatory bottom up appraisal process, but with some flexibility to allow for the use of indicators and benchmarks.

The report concludes with a number of recommendations, and requests the Commission to take decisions on these issues during this session.

Now I will turn to the report of the Secretary-General on “**Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda**” contained in document **E/CN.5/2010/6**.

This report presents an overview of the status of disability-inclusive development cooperation within the framework of multilateral, regional and bilateral initiatives. The report notes that mainstreaming disability in development has been on the United Nations agenda for more than a quarter of a century and that many development agencies have taken important steps to mainstream disability at the policy level.

Mainstreaming disability in development cooperation at the programme and project levels is, however, relatively new to most development partners and remains an ongoing process. Many development agencies continue to make the transition from developing policy papers and guidance notes to implementing programmes and projects. Knowledge on identifying and evaluating best practices is still being accumulated.

The report concludes that the potential of mainstreaming remains to be fully realized. It recommends that disability-inclusive policies should be adopted at all levels of development cooperation in line with the international normative and operational frameworks for development cooperation, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other relevant international instruments on disability and development.

Finally, I wish to draw the Commission’s attention to item **3 (c)** of the provisional agenda on “**Emerging issues: Policy responses on employment and**

**the social consequences of the financial and economic crisis, including its gender dimension”** and the **“Note by the Secretariat”** from which the title is derived, contained in document **E/CN.5/2010/8**.

This Note examines the impact of the global financial and economic crisis on employment and social development, including its gender dimension, and discusses the policy responses to the crisis at the national and international levels. Furthermore, the Note provides policy recommendations to address the social consequences of the crisis.

The Note recognizes that the crisis has changed the lives of people worldwide, especially in developing countries, and threatens the gains made towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals and may reverse the advances in achieving inclusive social development. The crisis has impacted employment, with serious consequences for poverty and social cohesion, and resulted in cuts in social spending which disproportionately affect the access of women and girls to health and education. Similar negative impacts are felt by youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and migrants, all of whom are more vulnerable to exclusion and discrimination.

Both developed and developing countries are undertaking efforts to address the social consequences of the crisis. The Note discusses policy responses such as labour market programmes, including public works programmes, cash transfers, temporary subsidies, support for housing and fee waivers. Other measures include job and skills training and job placement services. It was observed that most public works programmes address the contraction in labour demand with little consideration to the gender impact of the crisis.

In addition, the Note addresses supportive international frameworks and initiatives regarding employment and labour market policies, including the United Nations System's joint crisis initiatives, in particular the Global Jobs Pact and the Social Protection Floor, which focus on employment and social protection issues respectively.

Among its recommendations, the Note emphasizes the importance of prioritizing employment creation and social protection for all women and men; protecting core social spending in health and education; promoting policies that accelerate jobs recovery by increasing the job content of growth; including a gender perspective in all policy responses to the crisis and adequate levels of funding for gender equality and the empowerment of women; and giving special attention to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups hit hard by the crisis.

At the international level, the recommendations include the need for providing increased support to developing countries consistent with national policies and priorities to counter the social impacts of the crisis and strengthening and coordinating efforts by the United Nations system to realize the crisis initiatives.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes the presentation of reports under consideration before the Commission.

Thank you.