



**United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Division for Social Policy and Development**

**High-level panel discussion  
“Social integration and its relationship with poverty eradication and full  
employment and decent work for all”**

**48<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York, 4 February 2010**

**Background note**

The 48th session of the Commission for Social Development will be convened in New York from 3 to 12 February 2010 and will discuss the priority theme of social integration. This will be the policy session in the two-year cycle of the Commission’s work and its deliberations shall focus on policy options and practical measures to implement the goal of enhancing social integration and to overcome challenges in that area.

The High-level panel discussion will take place on Thursday, 4 February from 10:00 am to 1 pm and will address social integration and its linkages with the goals of eradicating poverty and promoting full employment and decent work for all.

At the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), held in Copenhagen in 1995, heads of State and Government committed themselves to

*“promoting social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security, and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons”.*

Poverty eradication, full employment and decent work and social integration are interrelated, and mutually reinforcing. Accordingly, the focus of this panel discussion will be on poverty eradication and the promotion of full employment and decent work as viewed through the lens of social integration.

Poverty can be both the cause and the consequence of social exclusion. As poverty has multiple and interlinked causes, there is a need for more comprehensive

social policies to create coherence among targeted programmes. The social integration of people living in poverty should encompass meeting basic human needs, including nutrition, health, water and sanitation, housing and access to education and employment, through integrated development strategies. At the same time, empowering people living in poverty to be involved in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies and programmes, is critical.

Ensuring equal access to decent employment opportunities is a key component of social integration; thus it is important to ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach everyone in society. Moreover, the right to work, rights at work, access to social protection and social dialogue – which are the basic elements of decent work – should be available to all. Full employment and decent work provide a pathway out of poverty and create a channel towards the social inclusion of marginalized groups, including young people, women, indigenous peoples, migrants and persons with disabilities, and will thus lead to stronger social cohesion and to realizing the vision laid out in the Copenhagen Declaration.

The panel discussion will allow for an interchange of ideas among Members States, relevant United Nations agencies and civil society on strategies for social integration in the context of poverty eradication and promotion of full employment. This interaction is intended to stimulate thinking on how to incorporate social integration policies and principles into broader poverty eradication and employment policies. At the same time, panellists will explore how efforts to eradicate poverty and promote full employment and decent work can help to advance social integration, particularly of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable persons and groups in society.

Suggested questions for discussion:

1. In what ways are social integration, poverty eradication and the promotion of full employment and decent work interrelated and mutually reinforcing?
2. How does social exclusion contribute to poverty and unemployment?
3. How are social protection programmes vital to achieving social integration, poverty eradication and employment goals? What are some of the ways in which social protection measures can be structured to enhance the social integration of vulnerable and marginalized groups and persons?
4. What are some innovative ways in which social integration policies and practices have helped to achieve poverty eradication and the promotion of full employment and decent work?
5. How can efforts to achieve poverty eradication and full employment and decent work help to advance social integration, particularly of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society?
6. What efforts can be taken to ensure that policies to promote poverty eradication and productive employment and decent work are non-discriminatory and rights-based, provide for equality of opportunity, and facilitate the participation of all people in their formulation and outcomes, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons?