

Civil Society Participation in the 2011 Commission for Social Development: An Overview

Poverty Eradication



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Table of Contents

Preface	vii
Civil Society Forum	1
1. Civil Society Declaration	3
2. Statements:	
H.E. Jorge Valero	8
Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram	10
Mr. Werner Puschra	12
Ms. Jane Stewart	14
Mr. Martin Lees	16
3. Workshops	21
Debt Cancellation — Human Dignity Demands It!	21
Microfinance — Human Dignity Demands It!	22
Decent Work — Human Dignity Demands It!	22
Commission for Social Development (CSocD)	23
1. Chair’s Summary on the priority theme: Poverty Eradication	25
2. Executive Summary on Promoting Social Integration: Voices from the Grassroots	27
3. NGOs Written Statements	28
4. NGOs Oral Statements	29
5. Side Events	29
Conclusion	31
1. Rethinking the Role of Civil Society in Eradicating Poverty: Innovative solutions to fight global poverty	33
2. Looking Forward to the 50th Session of the Commission for Social Development: An NGO Perspective	34
Annexes	35
List of Bureau Members	37
Members of the NGO Committee for Social Development	37
Provisional List of Governments and UN Agencies	39
Provisional List of NGOs	39
Online Tools and Resources	41

DESA

<http://www.un.org/desa/>

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations Secretariat is a vital interface between global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main interlinked areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyses a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which States Members of the United Nations draw to review common problems and take stock of policy options; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint courses of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy principles developed at United Nations conferences and summits into programmatic frameworks at the country level and; through technical assistance, it helps build national capacities.

CSOU-DSPD

<http://social.un.org/index/>

The Civil Society and Outreach Unit (CSOU) of the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of DESA serves as an interface between DSPD and non-governmental organizations. It acts as a gateway for NGOs interested in building a strong working relationship with the Division in advancing social progress and development. The main responsibility of the Unit is to: (a) provide advisory services to representatives of NGOs on the various aspects of the work of DSPD; (b) hold briefings for representatives of NGOs on mandates and core issues relating to social development and to the work of the Division; (c) encourage a more active involvement of NGOs in the substantive work of the Division; (d) contribute to promoting social policy and development among civil society organization by conducting briefings, seminars and workshops and participates in activities carried out by NGOs.

Commission for Social Development (CSocD)

<http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment.aspx>

The Commission for Social Development (CSocD) is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. It consists of 46 members elected by ECOSOC. Since the convening of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, the Commission has been the key United Nations body in charge of the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. It meets once a year in New York at the United Nations Headquarters, usually in February and takes up key social development themes as parts of its follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. The terms of references

of the Commission are to (a) improve international understanding on social development through, inter alia, the exchange of information and experience; (b) integrate, within the framework of the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, consideration of issues relating to the situation of social groups, including review of relevant United Nations programmes of action related to such groups, and consideration of other sectoral issues; (c) identify emerging issues affecting social development that require urgent consideration, and make substantive recommendations thereon; (d) advise ECOSOC on social policies of a general character and give particular attention to policies designed to promote social progress, to the establishment of social objectives and programme priorities and social research in areas affecting social and economic development; (e) advise ECOSOC on measures needed for the coordination of activities in the social field and for the recording and exchange of experience among Governments in the formulation and execution of social development policies; (f) advise ECOSOC on such international agreements and conventions on any of these matters, as may be required, and on their execution; (g) make recommendations regarding social development to ECOSOC; (h) elaborate practical measures aimed at furthering Summit recommendations.

NGO Committee for Social Development

<http://www.ngosocdev.net>

The NGO Committee for Social Development is dedicated to raising awareness and holding discussions on social development issues taken up by the United Nations (UN) System and in particular by the Commission for Social Development. The Committee advocates on social development issues in other forums such as the Commission for Sustainable Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the General Assembly. The members of the Committee one another inform and deliver group statements to the United Nations voicing ideas and positions on key social development issues. In addition, the Committee is focused on reviewing the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. The Committee is a substantive committee of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO).

Preface

During its forty-ninth session this year, the Commission for Social Development reviewed global efforts to eradicate poverty when it met at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 9 to 18 February 2011.

The present report highlights how civil society organizations were involved in the different aspects of the work of the Commission for Social Development before, during and after the session. It intends to stimulate a more proactive and productive involvement of NGOs in the work of the Commission and to contribute to promoting social policy and development among civil society organizations. The report is a tool for new non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that will start working with the United Nations on social development issues. It shows how they can be involved in the substantive work of the Commission to promote social development for all.

The report comprises two main sections relating to the participation of NGOs at the Commission for Social Development. It contains annexes listing the members of the Bureau of the Commission, members of the NGO Committee for Social Development, the participants and UN-DESA online tools for NGOs.

Section 1: Civil Society Forum

Each year, the NGO Committee for Social Development conducts a Civil Society Forum, based on the priority theme to be addressed by the Commission for Social Development at its annual session. The theme of the Forum this year was "Poverty Eradication: Human dignity Demands It." Coming less than five months after the MDG Summit last September, the Forum was an opportunity for representatives

of governments and civil society organizations to engage on issues relevant to effective policies and practices that would lead to poverty reduction.

The Forum called for a shared vision of ethical and social commitment to redirect the economy towards a sustainable future characterized by equity and social integration. "We need to address the root causes of poverty and make a fundamental shift from the dominant development model," Ms. Catherine Ferguson, Chair of the NGO Committee for Social Development, said, pointing to "basic deficiencies" in the current development model.

The Forum highlighted the most effective poverty eradication programmes focused on multiple benefits for the whole community; community-based assessment, planning, execution and evaluation; participation by those more directly affected; and programme sustainability.

Section 2: Commission for Social Development (CSocD)

The Commission considered a report of the Secretary-General outlining current poverty trends and presenting an overview of the main challenges to poverty eradication. It launched a debate on the emerging issue of social protection as a measure to protect people from becoming trapped in poverty, to empower them to seize opportunities and to reduce vulnerabilities, preventing the deterioration of living conditions and facilitating livelihood regeneration.

Under the agenda item of the follow-up to the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, the Commission reviewed plans and programmes of action

relating to social groups, including persons with disabilities, youth, older persons and families.

The members of the Commission considered reports of the Secretary-General on ways and means of observing the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. They discussed the implementation of the World Programme of Action on Youth and the strategic framework for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. The Commission also heard the report of its Special Rapporteur on disability.

As 2011 was a review year, the members of the Commission were not expected to adopt any policy-shaping resolution on the priority theme of poverty eradication; however, the commission adopted, without a vote, five resolutions

calling for wide-ranging steps, from support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the upcoming review of the action plan on ageing to improving the lot of youth, persons with disabilities and families.

I hope that this Report will prove to be valuable in encouraging many more NGOs from around the world to take part in the work of the Commission for Social Development. It is only through participation that we can empower all groups in society to promote social development for all.

I therefore look forward to your continued active participation and engagement in the future sessions of the Commission for Social Development.



***Daniela Bas, Director,
Division for Social Policy and Development***

Civil Society Forum





Civil Society Forum

1. Civil Society Declaration: Eradication of Poverty: A civil society perspective 2011

Introduction

The eradication of poverty has proven to be an elusive goal despite it being central to the international development agenda. Recent studies, in particular the DESA “Rethinking Poverty” report, suggest that conventional approaches are not working¹. The dominant development model has not created a socially just world; rather it has put at risk a sustainable future by human-induced emissions of greenhouse gases and overuse of non-renewable resources and has favoured the wealthy over those forced to live in poverty. It will take a shared ethical and social commitment to redirect our culture and economy toward a sustainable future. The current crises throw into bold relief a model of development that is blind to environmental and human rights issues and confuses economic growth alone with progress.

We strongly endorse the call to rethink and refocus our efforts to eradicate poverty through policies and programmes at all levels that are equitable, integrated and that address the systemic roots of inequality.

Multidimensional poverty

Poverty is a complex human reality. Poverty is not the condition of a fixed group of people; everyone is at risk of experiencing poverty at some point in their lives. Lack of income by itself can never adequately measure or explain poverty.

Because it is multi-dimensional, poverty encompasses all aspects of human life. Such factors as geography, a vulnerable environment, the limitations that age, disability or illness impose, all contribute to the experience of poverty. Structural limitations such as social exclusion, lack of access to the tools and the absence of the necessary conditions that enable a person to participate in social, economic and political life, characterize extreme poverty which leaves people marginalized in their own society. The powerlessness flowing from these causes, damages a person's spirit and capacity to relate with others.

The new indices proposed in the 2010 Human Development Report — the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index, the Gender Inequality Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index — expand our current understanding of poverty and offer us some tools to measure it.²

Cumulative impact of multiple crises

The recent crises: climate, financial, economic, food and energy, have culminated in increasing levels of poverty in many areas of the world. Massive investment, both consistent and long term, is called for in researching, developing and making technologies available to mitigate and adapt to the changes we are facing. Unwavering political will is needed if we are not to squander the progress already made in addressing poverty.

¹ *Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010* (United Nations, 2009). Also available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/docs/2010/fullreport.pdf>

² *The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development* (UNDP Human Development Report, 2010)

The climate crisis is increasingly recognized as a cross-cutting issue which exacerbates poverty and threatens the achievement of the MDGs as a whole. Although it is a global phenomenon, its negative impacts are more severely felt in poor countries and by people living in poverty.³ To name one example: agriculture and fisheries in climate sensitive areas can suffer drastic economic effects from extreme variations of temperatures. This in turn puts at risk the provision of basic services to people living in poverty.

The global financial and economic crisis has strained some governments' ability to meet the social, educational and health needs of their citizens. Governments require the policy and fiscal space to allocate resources according to the priorities of their development plans. All illegitimate and odious debt and the debts of the poorest countries should be cancelled. We support the establishment of a sovereign debt workout mechanism under UN auspices to ensure equitable arbitration of debt that is enforceable.⁴

The food and energy crises have had a direct negative impact on people living in poverty, particularly small scale farmers, among whom women farmers predominate. Croplands that have traditionally met the nutrition needs of rural communities have been converted to the production of biofuels and other cash crops.

Because these crises present challenges that are closely linked, the global community has a window of opportunity to address them in a unified and holistic way.

This is highlighted in the Secretary General's words in Cancún,⁵ "I am deeply concerned that our efforts have been insufficient ... that despite the evidence ... and many years of negotiation ...

we are still not rising to the challenge. Now, more than ever, we need to connect the dots between climate... poverty ... energy ... food ... water".

Addressing the root causes of poverty

A fundamental shift from the dominant development model

Efforts to tackle the multiple crises have uncovered some basic deficiencies in the current model of global partnership for development. Key among these deficits are the absence of a human rights framework and the subordination of social and ecological needs to the demands of economic growth.

"The norms and values embedded in the Millennium Declaration and international human rights instruments must continue to provide the foundation for engagement, in particular the key human rights principles of non-discrimination, meaningful participation and accountability"⁶ If policies and programmes to eradicate poverty are to be effective, the active involvement, as essential partners, of people living in poverty is crucial. Their efforts must be recognized and actively supported by government policy makers.

Basic reform of the international financial architecture

The dominant economic system based on an unregulated free market has caused significant negative economic and environmental consequences. The Bretton Woods institutions are not serving the needs of the global community. A growing consensus indicates that global imbalances in savings and consumption must be addressed. It is urgent that the architecture for international aid and global trade agreements

³ Synthesis Report of the Third Assessment Report of the IPCC (2001) cited in *Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010* (United Nations, 2009, p.4).

⁴ African Forum and Network on Debt and Development, "Call for Establishment of a Fair and Transparent Arbitration Mechanism on Debt." *Policy Brief No.1*, 2002.

⁵ *UN News*, 8 December 2010.

⁶ *Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*. Draft resolution to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, by the General Assembly at its 64th session. New York, September 2010, p.28.

be re-examined.⁷ The wisdom of maintaining a single currency as the major reserve currency ought to be closely examined in reforming international financial architecture.

An integrated approach to poverty eradication will lack credibility if the issue of military spending is not addressed. This calls for a revolutionary change of attitude by government decision makers to fund human rights-based development over war. Secretary-General Ban's recent comments to youth suggest the difference such a change would make to the task of poverty eradication,⁸ "Every year, the world spends \$1.4 trillion dollars on weapons. With a fraction of that we could cut poverty, fund schools, provide health care, and protect the environment. One year of global military spending could pay the UN's budget for 732 years".

Key leverage points for addressing poverty

Education

Wide consensus exists that education is a critical tool in poverty eradication. Each state must provide the education needed by its citizens to address the moral, social, cultural, spiritual, political and economic dimensions of poverty. Universal access to primary education is the starting point. Lifelong education that provides skills and increases the potential for meaningful employment, responsible citizenship and successful social integration in a changing world is essential.

If education for all is to succeed as a tool of transformation to bridge the inequality gap, states must allocate sufficient budgetary resources to make this possible. Classrooms without books or teachers without sufficient

training limit the effectiveness of a national education policy. Other barriers such as lack of access to clean water and basic sanitation have consequences not only for health, but for education too.

Gender equity

In many countries of the world legal, economic and political rights enjoyed by men are often denied to women. Furthermore, poverty and the consequences of climate change exacerbate already existing gender inequalities. Discrimination and violence against women and girls is a daily occurrence. Many women, particularly rural and older women, are denied the right to inherit property and own land, preventing them from enjoying economic independence and security. Legal empowerment of people living in poverty is especially urgent for women.

Poverty eradication begins with the legal registration of all births and extends to implementing women's legal rights to land ownership and inheritance. Women's access to human rights and social justice empowers and ensures them a means of livelihood, income and freedom from discrimination and violence. Only when women and men, supported by gender sensitive legislation, work together to change social customs and cultural practices that discriminate and condone violence against women and girls, will gender equity be achieved.

Investment in agriculture

Seventy percent of the world's poorest live in rural areas. Some 2 billion farmers, the majority of whom are women, engage in small-scale agriculture which feeds the majority of the world's population. Investment in this sector has decreased by almost 20% in recent years. An ambitious increase in investment in small-scale agriculture is urgently needed. This would also help to slow the rate of departure from the land for the city.

Government policy is a major determinant in moving towards solutions. If a state is to improve

⁷ "The Global Economic Crisis after One Year: Is a New Paradigm for Recovery in Developing Countries Emerging?" *Policy Brief UNU Number 2*, 2009.

⁸ Secretary-General's remarks to Security Council "informal informal" Youth Session, New York, 21 December 2010.

its potential for development through a viable agricultural sector, the first place to look is to the farmer in rural communities. Examples from such countries as Malawi, Tanzania and Rwanda show how policies that make it easier for small farmers to obtain seeds and fertilizers produced greater harvests, addressed food insecurity and led to impressive economic growth.

Governments should facilitate dialogue between small farmers, scientists, agribusiness and NGOs to explore sustainable agricultural practices to improve productivity while restoring the soil and the natural environment. Developing equitable partnerships between small farmers and others in the supply chain would benefit all.

Productive employment

Jobless growth based on the single economic bottom line is unacceptable. Progress must be measured by the triple bottom line: social, environmental and economic benefits. To promote full employment and decent work for all, appropriate national policies must insure the protection of labour rights of all workers in both the formal and informal sector, including domestic and small-farm workers, especially women. A universal social protection floor to ensure services that respond to the basic needs of workers and their families, including those who work in the informal sector or who are unable to work, is essential for all workers, especially in times of crises.⁹

Social Inclusion

Well-being, material and non-material, depends on the socio-political structure in which people live. People living in poverty often experience a sense of powerlessness because of discrimination, lack of access, lack of representation and lack of voice. Active involvement of these men and women, at all levels, in planning and implementing development strategies has proven

effective in poverty reduction and sustainable care of the environment. Vigorous effort is needed to transform structures of exclusion and create new social norms more conducive to social inclusion. We applaud those countries that have already recognized that social inclusion is essential to a more equal society and have created ministries of social inclusion.

Best Practices

Our experience with community involvement has shown us that the most effective programmes focused on poverty eradication are characterized by the following elements:

- Multiple benefits for the whole community
- Community-based assessment, planning, execution and evaluation
- Participation of those most directly affected by the programme or policy
- Design and implementation is able to be replicated
- The programme or practice is sustainable.

Conclusion

There is no one right way to reduce poverty. Though research by UNRISD¹⁰ indicates that countries that have successfully reduced poverty have focused on state-directed strategies linking economic development goals with active social policies so that they reinforce rather than compete with each other, countries must be allowed the policy space to develop different models of development appropriate to their situation. Such models should take into account local aspects of food security and livelihoods, land reform, cultural rights, gender equity, social policy and participatory democracy as key ingredients.

A necessary key to success in turning back the scourge of poverty, however, is governance

⁹ ILO-UN social protection floor initiative: the role of social security in crisis response and recovery, and beyond. June 2010. http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/portal/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1387&Itemid=368

¹⁰ "Combating Poverty and Inequality", UNRISD Research and Policy Brief 10, September, 2010

that is transparent and open to scrutiny and a justice system that is fair, restorative and equally available to all. The energetic involvement of governments is essential. So also, involvement of civil society and the local community is not optional, but an essential ingredient in the struggle to overcome extreme poverty and imagine a new more civilized and humane world.

It is within our power to eradicate poverty if we are willing to address the root causes of poverty and inequality. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, based on the inherent dignity of the human person, is a firm foundation on which to construct a life free from poverty for all people.

The UN Human Rights Council's "Draft Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights"¹¹ which highlights the indivisibility and interdependence of cultural, civic, social, political and economic rights of all people and names discrimination and stigmatization as roots of inequity, is also integral to the way forward as are the three pillars of Copenhagen: social inclusion, decent work and full employment, along with the eradication of poverty.

¹¹ A/HRC/2/2 *Report of the sub-commission on the promotion and protection of human rights on its 58th session*, p. 29. UN Geneva, September 2009, United Nations, and A/HRC/15/41 *Report of the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmon, on the draft guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights*, August 2010, United Nations.

2. Statements



H.E. Jorge Valero

Chairperson of the 49th Session of the Commission for Social Development, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Venezuela to the United Nations

Distinguished Representatives of the various civil society organizations gathered here today,

On behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and in my capacity as Chairman of the Commission for Social Development, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for sharing with you in this scenario, which allows us to deliberate on the challenges we face in the Eradication of Poverty.

Within the framework of the Presidency of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we firmly intend to re-power the work of the Commission for Social Development. This is why, starting with the 49th Session of the Commission for Social Development we will undertake an intensive work plan to promote various participative and inclusive debates and events in order to identify innovative strategies and policies to help eradicate poverty and overcome inequality in the world.

At almost sixteen years since the commitments were made by Heads of State and

Government at the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in the year 1995, the Eradication of Poverty is still a pre-condition *sine qua non* in order to achieve social justice and comprehensive development for our peoples.

This should become a priority issue on the international agenda, as there is widespread evidence that poverty, injustice and inequality undermine human dignities and deny the peoples their rights and aspirations. Within this context, it is necessary to give a social approach to the multilateral agenda to guide the action of the United Nations.

The exercise and enjoyment of all human rights for all inhabitants of planet earth, is the most pressing challenge of our time.

In various documents adopted at major United Nations Conferences, the intimate relationship between poverty eradication and the achievement of social justice has been emphasized.

However, the comprehensive development of our peoples is now seriously threatened. Spending destined for social programs is being cut. Social gains are diminishing in order to satisfy the chrematistic appetites of a few. On this road — and this is where we stand — it will be impossible to meet the Copenhagen Commitments and the Millennium Development Goals.

The dilemma facing the world today is very simple: either we promote development with equity and social justice, or we promote economic and financial policies that deepen inequality and injustice between human beings.

Despite the efforts that many countries are making to meet the goal of poverty eradication and overcoming inequality, it is likely that they will continue to grow and become more difficult

to solve in many countries, as was recognized in the Report of the Secretary General.

It has been shown that those countries that have reduced inequality and poverty the most have been those where there has been extensive social investment. Consequently, just and inclusive social policies must be part of a comprehensive strategy for development.

We are required to confront all structural and cyclical factors that cause poverty. In this sense, it is imperative to rescue the social dimension of development models, and move towards new forms of social organization, with security and social protection systems that help to eradicate poverty, hunger, misery, discrimination, inequality, and prevent unemployment.

The construction of a new model of development must be human centered. The aim is to achieve social justice through social inclusion, equity and active participation of the peoples. These are the new paradigms of the new model of development.

In order to eradicate poverty, overcome inequality and discrimination, it is essential that the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably; that there are comprehensive social protection policies that benefit the majority of the population; that access to universal education is made available at all levels; that access to health-care, food, decent work and decent housing, and other benefits that dignify human beings be guaranteed.

Also, policies and strategies for social inclusion must be adapted to the realities and specific objectives of each country. The externally

imposed conditionalities have generated more poverty and inequality, proving their failure.

The process of formulating social policies should be sovereign, inclusive, participatory and co-responsible. Here we have a good space for civil society and social and popular movements to participate in.

Likewise, further progress is needed in gender equality and the empowerment of women and special measures should be implemented to ensure equal opportunities for the most excluded and vulnerable sectors of the population.

Civil society and social movements are part of a social and institutional fabric that can contribute — in a relevant manner — to the comprehensive development of the peoples. Along with States and Governments they can make a major contribution to achieving social justice and development.

This is a great moment to examine the complex phenomenon of poverty and design and implement innovative policies to combat it.

I invite you to exchange views and experiences during this important gathering of Civil Society, in order to look for alternative solutions that will help build societies based on equality and humanism.

Complying with the Declaration and Plan of Action on Social Development from Copenhagen, with the Millennium Development Goals and with other relevant international commitments on social development, constitutes an ethical and moral imperative for all the peoples of the world. Civil society and social movements have the floor.



Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram

Assistant Secretary General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends All,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Civil Society Forum, organized on the occasion of the 49th Session of the Commission for Social Development. It is my hope that this Forum will offer much needed insight on how to rid the world of poverty, and forge a society for all.

As has been the practice, the summary of your deliberations today will be shared with the Commission for Social Development during its opening plenary meeting tomorrow. We look forward to learning of the results of your meeting.

Civil society organizations have long been valuable partners in the fight to eradicate poverty. Your experiences at the forefront of efforts at the grassroots level have provided us with important lessons.

The MDG Summit, held in September last year, reviewed progress towards the MDGs, in particular the target to halve poverty and hunger by 2015. While it acknowledged good progress and practices in many countries, it is very clear that much remains to be done.

Most societies continue to be characterized by significant economic and social disparities,

in which persistent poverty sharply contrasts with growing wealth. Numerous indices of well-being — wages, income and wealth distribution, employment trends, education and health statistics — mostly point to increasingly unequal societies.

The 2010 Report on the World Social Situation (RWSS) highlighted various problems in measuring poverty. With its new data, the World Bank's poverty estimate rose from under a billion in 2004 to 1.4 billion in 2005, suggesting greater poverty, but also greater progress. Using the new Multidimensional Poverty Index, the 2010 Human Development Report estimates the number of poor people at 1.7 billion!

Meanwhile, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) claims that, over the past decade, the number of hungry was rising every year to over a billion in 2009, before declining marginally with lower food prices and modest economic recovery in 2010.

The 2010 RWSS was critical of poverty reduction programmes based on good governance, strengthening property rights without redistributive reforms, 'bottom of the pyramid' marketing, and commercial microcredit — well before the recent criticisms.

The impacts of the global financial, economic and food crisis have made our task of reducing poverty even more challenging, often affecting various social and economic groups in very different ways. These effects have also varied across and within regions and countries. Less skilled workers, youth, older persons, and migrant workers have often suffered most in terms of lost jobs, benefits and earnings.

The 2011 RWSS considers the adverse impacts of the financial and food crises, especially on sustainable development, poverty and inequality, underscoring the need for consistently countercyclical and developmental macroeconomic and inclusive financial policies, programmes, institutions and instruments.

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the Commission for Social Development, we will hear about the importance of achieving inclusive, job-rich economic growth in order to reduce poverty. Yet, in many countries, job-rich economic growth remains elusive, while global economic recovery remains tepid, uncertain and uneven. With premature stimulus withdrawal and fiscal austerity, the prospect of a double-dip recession cannot be discounted. Recent European trends in some countries underscore this risk.

To make matters worse, food prices are rising again. Extreme weather conditions, likely linked to climate change, threaten food security as never before. The effects of food diversion for biofuels and animal feed, and much greater commodity price speculation with lax monetary policies, may also have pushed up food prices again. All these present a fundamental challenge to our efforts to reduce poverty and hunger.

To effectively address economic insecurity and vulnerability, governments should put in place universal social protection systems and measures to help livelihood regeneration. These measures should include not only income support, but also protection of achievements in other developmental objectives, such as better nutrition, health and education outcomes.

But most poor countries do not have enough fiscal resources for these social protection and

livelihood regeneration programmes, and little is being done multilaterally to enhance national fiscal space. ODA trends are not promising, while policy conditionalities attached to credit from IFIs typically weaken overall estate capacities for development and social progress.

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Innovative and practical solutions for poverty eradication are essential to address the challenges posed by the current global situation. I am sure you will have much to share in this regard with the Commission for Social Development, the UN system and your colleagues.

I congratulate the NGO Committee on Social Development. In collaboration with NGLS, the Committee undertook the survey on implementation of the resolution on promoting social integration, which was adopted by the 48th Session of the Commission. This report will be of great interest to the development community, and would not have been possible without your initiative and hard work.

I take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and for your valuable partnership with the United Nations Secretariat in support of the work of the Commission for Social Development.

I wish you a very productive and successful meeting.

Thank you.



Mr. Werner Puschra

**Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
New York Office; Member,
Club de Madrid Working Group
on Shared Societies**

At last year's civil society forum I spoke about the need to create a socially responsible and democratic global economic system. This is a difficult challenge, but the only way to make globalization work for the people. Last year I focused on the main tasks ahead and formulated the following goals to be achieved:

- The creation of a transparent and democratic governance system for the global economy
- The globalization of social solidarity in order to combat inequalities
- The formulation of a new development paradigm that prioritizes poverty eradication, sustainability and equity.

One year has passed and where does the world stand now?

We saw several steps taken towards reaching those goals, but they were not sufficient.

Many people still suffer from the failures of governments to enact policies to address the high unemployment, resulting from the crisis. Again, we see rising food prices and increasing inequality, along with a fragile and uneven recovery.

At the same time, the financial institutions responsible for the crisis are making more profits

than before the crisis: Last year the revenues of the 25 largest financial firms on Wall Street rose to an all-time high of \$417 Billion. Out of this, the total compensation and benefits paid to its executives, traders and other employees amounted to a record \$135 Billion. To put this number in perspective, it is roughly equal to the annual Gross domestic product of countries like Algeria, Hungary, Peru or New Zealand and slightly less than the annual GDP of Nigeria.

It is obvious that the global economic governance system is still not working properly, and that there is still a profound need to create global structures and a system that would ensure an accountable, equitable and sustainable international economic order and responsible business practices. This is necessary to encourage and support appropriate national policies leading to greater economic wellbeing throughout the world, and not just for a few. People around the world feel increasingly frustrated, because they have been told that globalization and the international market would rescue them from poverty, and instead they are worse off and have to pay for the crisis.

This is certainly one reason for the protests in the Arab world, where young people in many countries now take to the streets to demand political and economic change. This year, we are celebrating the year of the youth, but it is them who are the most affected and are facing a very uncertain future under the present circumstances. Recently, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, pointed to dangerous economic and social imbalances, which could sow the seeds of the next crisis. He pointed to the social strains within countries with high unemployment and widening income gaps and cautioned that "we face the prospect of a lost generation of young people, destined to suffer their whole lives from worse unemployment and social conditions." He said that the creation of jobs must be a top priority in advanced as well as in poor countries.

In this context I would like to bring your attention to an important initiative undertaken after last year's Commission for Social Development by the Club of Madrid, the world's largest forum of former democratic Heads of States and Governments. It started a working group on economic arguments for a shared society. The Club of Madrid understands a shared society as one in which "people hold an equal capacity to participate in, and benefit from, economic, political, and social opportunities regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and other attributes, and, where as a consequence, relations between the groups are peaceful."

A shared society not only brings about positive social results, but — as we learned through the work of the experts group — a shared society also contributes to the economic wellbeing of its members. It does so through producing stability, which in turn nurtures trust in its institutions and contributes to human development by fostering sustainable growth.

A shared society also strengthens the capacity of the state by creating a fiscal dividend and maximizing the economic contributions of all individuals. This allows the state to restructure its expenditure in favor of marginalized groups in the society and broadens its revenue base. In this way, a shared society creates a virtuous circle of development. When governments act on behalf of their entire populations, people are more likely to identify with and support the common good. If and when people are engaged in supporting the common good, governments in return will be more stable and therefore better able and inclined to act on behalf of all their citizens.

As a result of this analysis there is a strong case to be made in favor of a shared society.

But what are the policy challenges to be overcome?

Presently countries around the world face a number of challenges, brought about by the financial and economic crisis. Some have

embraced fiscal austerity and are trying to balance their budgets through cuts in needed social services. Others see the need for further monetary and fiscal expansion, in order to grow out of the crisis.

Even in the first case, governments have a choice as to how to make intelligent expenditure cuts in favor of a shared society, instead of creating new divisions between groups of affected people.

Also governments should, in their efforts to revitalize their economies, bring more people into the formal economy and create jobs to allow more people to participate in the creation of wealth.

Other policy challenges include progressive tax systems to reduce income inequalities, the reduction of fossil and agricultural subsidies in advanced countries, and the improvement and extension of delivery systems for social services.

These are just a few examples of the policy challenges ahead. All of these are directed to national policies in the countries you are working in.

But in the era of globalization, and here I'm coming back to the beginning of my intervention, we also need a strong and coordinated global framework of institutions and rules. The financial crisis exposed the fact that the current structures were unable to prevent the transmission of the crisis from the US to the rest of the world. It also exposed a vast disillusionment with the legitimacy and effectiveness of the current international arrangements for dealing with such a crisis. But more than that is at stake: if we settle for a global system that is unable to meaningfully regulate the global markets, how can we expect it to produce solutions for the other cross-cutting truly global problems, like climate change, the energy crisis, and the food crisis and poverty eradication?

All of this leaves a lot of work for Civil Society organizations around the world. They

must continue to lobby their governments to embark on a path to correct the failures of our outdated global system, which was created under completely different political and economic circumstances more than 65 years ago.

Only then can we expect an increase in economic wellbeing for all, through a sustainable and equitable system of global social governance, which will then contribute to people's well-being.



Ms. Jane Stewart

**Special Representative and Director,
ILO Office to the United Nations**

Mr. Chair,

In 2004, the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization expressed concern that “deep-seated and persistent imbalances in the current workings of the global economy are ethically unacceptable and politically unsustainable”. Today, perceptions of unfairness and frustration continue to grow alongside rising unemployment, which is presently around 205 million¹², growing income inequalities with roughly half of the world's population living on the equivalent of US\$2 a day, and increasing incidences of natural disasters which are rolling back decades of hard-won gains. This slow and unstable progress requires us to rethink and retool how the sustainable development

framework based on economic, social and environmental policies, may be better integrated into the work of this Commission in order to more broadly enhance and implement its social policy advice.

At the outset, we must recognize the need to establish a much closer relationship between social and labour market developments and macroeconomic policy. For far too long, macroeconomic policies alone have had limited success in creating the conditions necessary for rapid and sustainable growth, job creation, increased productivity and wages, reduction of poverty and social integration. This proof is witnessed in the current high levels of unemployment which stand in stark contrast to the recovery seen in other key macroeconomic indicators such as global GDP, consumption and world trade, all of which recovered from the crisis by 2010. Not only is the labour market stressed due to crisis-led unemployment, but many economies are not even creating enough jobs to absorb the growth in the working-age population. These persistent challenges have in turn led to deterioration in social development. In this regard, we note the encouraging progress made in the outcome document adopted by the 2010 MDG Summit which underscores the importance of “adopting

¹² ILO Global Employment Trends, 2011

forward-looking, macroeconomic policies that promote sustainable development and lead to sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, increase productive employment opportunities and promote agricultural and industrial development". The Commission could continue this momentum to ensure that employment is not considered a residual or merely a sector policy at the margins of economic policy. Full employment and decent work must become a key macroeconomic objective alongside low inflation and sound fiscal measures in order to achieve a more stable and balanced growth and support poverty eradication.

Mr. Chair,

Recognizing that the impacts of climate change are already upon us and the importance of moving towards a low carbon economy, it is equally important to clearly understand the social impacts of this transition and link good social policy with good environmental policy. ILO experience demonstrates that well designed, environment related investments are beneficial for employment overall. However, we acknowledge that there will be shifts in the labour market that lead to job losses in the short term. To offset these losses, a coherent framework is needed to ensure a just transition to a low carbon economy with decent work at the center which includes strong social protection policies, together with the promotion of sustainable enterprises, economic diversification and capacity building. Without an equitable sharing of the costs and benefits of environmental protection within and between countries, neither poverty eradication nor social justice can be achieved.

Mr. Chair,

The linkages between the three pillars of sustainable development help us to understand more deeply the role of social protection in forging inclusive growth and poverty eradication. Poverty takes many shapes and therefore, requires us to go beyond the measurements of income and asset holdings, to encompass

non-monetary dimensions and rights. Ensuring a basic level of social protection is a human right and an economic necessity. This growing recognition is perhaps why the Social Protection Floor Initiative has come front and center in poverty eradication discussions today. The importance of social protection lies in its ability to interrupt the high levels of risk and vulnerability which often contribute to sustained chronic poverty. Many developing countries have successfully taken measures to build their nationally defined social protection floors or have introduced elements thereof. The results of programmes in these countries show us that the impact of the social protection floor on poverty, vulnerability and inequality can be dramatic, and it can be progressively affordable even in LDCs. Expanding social protection for all through the implementation and expansion of a basic social protection floor is not just good social policy, it is good economic policy. It can produce a virtuous cycle among incomes, aggregate demand, expansion of markets and job creation. The social protection floor has been identified in the MDG outcome document as an area in need of scaling up. This Commission could play a role in ensuring that this important policy plank is expanded and we look forward to continued discussions during the emerging issues segment.

Mr. Chair,

This Commission has a long history of providing quality social policy advice. We trust that support for the social protection floor will be added to this good advice. We also note that the Commission may enhance the implementation of its policy advice by intentionally and overtly defining the linkages between sound social policy and sound economic and environmental policy. By embracing and operationalizing the UN's sustainable development framework, the Commission can help promote policy coherence and support a more sustainable development path that is responsive to the challenges of the 21st century.

I thank you.



Mr. Martin Lees

**International Affairs Expert,
The Climate Change Task Force;
General Secretary, Club of Rome
(2008-2010); Assistant Secretary General
of the Financing System for Science and
Technology for Development, United
Nations**

Mme. Chair, your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to address this Civil Society Forum focused on the high moral and practical purpose to eradicate poverty throughout the world so that our fellow men and women can live lives of dignity, well-being and hope. I would like to thank the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, particularly Dr. Werner Puschna, for this opportunity. At the start, let me underline that in this short talk I am condemned to generalize: I cannot of course reflect the great diversity of situations, needs and aspirations in a complex and pluralist world.

My talk will adopt the perspective opened up by Albert Einstein when he said: *"No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it."* To eradicate poverty from the world will require not only new ideas, new strategies and new institutional frameworks, but most fundamentally, it will require a moral awakening to the scandal of the coexistence of extreme levels of wealth together with desperate, grinding poverty both within nations and across the world.

The strategies which have driven the rise of the industrialized countries, heavily influenced by corporate and financial interests, are not well

suited to the needs, aspirations and conditions of the less developed countries. As Prime Minister Zapatero of Spain declared "While the financial crisis is a parenthesis for wealthy nations, in countries suffering from hunger and extreme poverty, crisis is a way of life."

Let me start with two obvious questions to illuminate this intolerable state of affairs: first, how do we explain that, in a world economy on the scale of \$60 trillion per year, over 1 billion people are living today in poverty and deprivation? Second, do we really expect the world to remain stable and peaceful as the population rises to 9 billion people by 2050, especially when 90% of this increase will occur in the poorer countries of the world where resources are desperately limited and societies and the environment are already under intense stress.

I will now suggest answers to my two questions. First, the co-existence of extreme and increasing wealth with entrenched poverty demonstrates that economic growth — as presently conceived — is failing to include the poor in the benefits of progress. It follows that our established models of growth, development and globalization must be radically reconceived if we are to eradicate poverty. As John Maynard Keynes famously observed: *"Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist."*

Global economic strategy remains in fact committed to the notion that recovery to a path of consumer-driven, economic growth will generate employment and reduce poverty. This is by no means clear. We can also see that our "business as usual" path of growth is building up massive imbalances and vulnerabilities which constitute serious threats to the future.

Our present model of growth is failing in four essential respects:

- First, it is clearly failing to eradicate poverty and to offer decent lives to hundreds

of millions of people. It is in fact increasing inequality within and between nations.

- Second, it is grossly inefficient as it fails to provide the opportunities and conditions for hundreds of millions of people to improve their lives through productive work.
- Third, it is destroying the ecological foundations of our civilization and destabilizing the climate. It is already clear that the most destructive impacts of climate change are on the poor and vulnerable, on those who have the least capacity to protect themselves and to adapt their lives to the new conditions. Thus, blind adherence to the present path of economic growth, by degrading the environmental conditions on which food security, clean water, health and livelihoods depend, is not only failing to reduce poverty but will ultimately increase it.
- And fourth, our present strategies for economic growth largely ignore the interests even of our children and of course, the rights and opportunities of future generations.

This leads, ladies and gentlemen, to the answer to my second question: can we expect the world to remain stable and peaceful in the future under these conditions? My answer is that the present path of world development is generating immense risks, inequities, imbalances and dangers. We cannot expect to preserve peace, stability and progress in an unjust, unequal world. We must have the courage to face the new realities and change the trajectory of world development.

Facing new realities

The world community today faces an array of massive challenges — in the global economy and the financial system, in the areas of climate, environment, water, energy and resources, and of course in relation to demographic change, rising inequality, poverty and exclusion. Although we insist on treating these problems intellectually and institutionally as if they were separate,

they are essentially linked. They are systemic and they are in a process of rapid change.

This is to say, in other words, that the world of the 21st Century is complex and interdependent and in a state of profound and rapid transformation. In this perspective it is clear, as implied by the title of my talk, that the strategies and structures on which we relied in the 20th Century will not be adequate to tackle the underlying systemic causes of poverty in the future.

We are in fact living in a Fool's Paradise: we must face in practice the reality of the problems confronting us today and those which lie only a few decades ahead. Let me give some quick examples of these new realities which will determine whether we can eradicate poverty in the future.

- First and most obviously, an additional 2.2 billion people are expected to arrive on this planet by 2050. How will they find the employment and the essential conditions which will enable nine billion people to avoid poverty and hunger and to live lives of dignity and fulfillment?
- Second, we are approaching a number of tipping points beyond which we risk triggering runaway, catastrophic climate change — with devastating consequences for the poorest and most vulnerable who have not caused these problems. We are seeing today the physical evidence across the world of accelerating climate change and its immediate and emerging impacts on development, on food and water security, on livelihoods and on the carrying capacity of productive land.

Scientists now understand the systems dynamics of climate change. They can interpret the historic record. And they are documenting the changes now taking place in the natural systems of the planet. They are increasingly concerned that, in the absence of strong and urgent action, the foundations of our civilization will be

compromised. All of humanity will be affected but it is the poor who will bear the brunt of ecological degradation, the extinction of species, widening desertification, sea level rise, the acidification of the oceans, changing weather patterns and extreme weather events.

- Third, energy is vital to development. We are approaching peak oil, but world energy output must double by 2050 if we are to meet the needs and aspirations of 9 billion people, including a growing world middle class. But we also know that, by 2050, emissions must be cut by 50 to 80% to preserve a stable climate. Prices for energy will rise and it will be the poor whose prospects of escaping poverty will be hardest hit.
- Another key aspect is that the vital ecological life-support systems of the planet — terrestrial, ocean and atmospheric — are fast degrading. What then will be the prospects for food security, safe water and health for several billion poor people? And it is these same ecosystems which absorb 50% of human climate emissions. As these systems degrade, concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will increase and climate change will accelerate, further damaging the prospects of the poor.

Thus in summary, how far we can succeed in eradicating world poverty will depend in practice on our commitment and effectiveness in managing a number of underlying factors: preserving a stable climate, halting the destruction of ecosystems, ensuring adequate energy supplies to sustain development, and, through the reduction of poverty, improvement in human security and the education of girls and women, containing as far as possible the growth of world population.

Economic growth, development and globalization have undoubtedly improved the lives of hundreds of millions of people in recent decades. But this has been achieved at alarming and unsustainable environmental cost and several

billion people remain excluded in relative or total poverty.

We are losing the creativity and productive potential of all the millions who are unemployed or underemployed in both developing and developed countries. In effect, our current path of world development is unstable, inequitable, profoundly inefficient and unsustainable, creating grave threats to the future.

Perhaps my most important message is that we live in a non-linear world. We assume that change will be gradual, that trends will steadily continue and that we have time for interminable negotiations before we decide on action. But nature will not wait and is indifferent to the fate of humanity. We must expect sudden and dramatic change in the life-support systems of the planet, unless that is, we act rapidly and effectively now. We are beginning to perceive this today. There is a moral and practical imperative to act without delay.

On the positive side, we do however have immense human capabilities available to manage and resolve these problems: creativity, knowledge and skills, effective systems of management and organization and vast human, technological and financial resources. Why is it then, that we cannot do better to eradicate poverty, and to anticipate and resolve the threats to the future of our civilization?

Why we are failing to eradicate poverty

Let me suggest why we are failing.

1) First, it is because of the dominance of narrow economic thinking and economic interests. Our present economic strategies remain implicitly based on the belief that poverty will be eradicated by economic growth. This was known earlier as the “trickle-down” effect. Recent studies show that economic growth — as measured by increases in GDP per capita — is a highly inefficient way of reducing poverty. Policies directly focused on redistribution, employment and poverty reduction are cheaper and more effective.

Now that the dominance of market fundamentalism is weakened, we must develop new models of economic growth in which the improvement of human welfare through growth, the eradication of poverty and the conservation of the natural world are given equal priority. We are seeing every day the consequences of the present strategy in which financial performance and the stimulation of demand are given first priority while the eradication of poverty, employment and the preservation of nature are of second order.

2) A further consequence of the dominance of economics and of narrow, short-term interests in world affairs is that we are failing to recognize environmental realities. The values of natural capital and of the ecosystems services on which humanity depends, especially the poor, are considered to be “externalities”, not generally included in the calculus of economic growth.

The impacts of environmental change on the poor in coming decades will be of critical importance. We will experience major changes in rainfall patterns, widening desertification, the continuing retreat of glaciers and rising intensity of extreme weather events which can negate years of development efforts as we have seen for example, in Pakistan, Australia and Russia.

We must prepare for a rise in environmentally-driven migration and a dramatic increase in humanitarian needs as a result of climate change, degradation of the environment and more frequent and intense natural disasters across the world.

3) A third factor of profound importance to our ability to eradicate poverty is the impact of globalization across the world. Globalization has made it possible for hundreds of millions to improve their lives, but several billion remain excluded in poverty and inequality is increasing. Individual nations, especially the less developed, have little capacity to preserve their development activities under the pressure of global trends and events. As Dr. Horst Koehler, former

President of Germany told the Club of Rome in 2007 “if globalization continues on the present path it will tear the world economy apart.”

The way ahead

These are some of the major problems we face in our efforts to eradicate poverty. What then would be the main elements of a more successful strategy to tackle the underlying systemic causes of poverty? The most crucial element is of course, effective policies at the national level, supported by the efforts of civil society and the business community. But the instabilities and pressures of the global systems of finance, trade and investment, the dominance in world markets and technology of powerful special interests and the web of subsidies and protectionism in the world trading system together define the realities of our interdependent world. National efforts alone cannot succeed in eradicating poverty. They must be enhanced and strengthened by appropriate policies at the international level.

I suggest that the following six key elements will be essential to reduce and eradicate poverty in coming years.

1) Individual countries must choose a new path for economic growth and development which should explicitly focus on social justice, on reducing poverty and inequality and on providing employment. Growth remains necessary to generate investment and innovation and to meet the needs of growing populations but, in most cases, it will not be helpful to follow the Western path of consumption-driven growth as measured by GDP per capita. Strategies must focus on the development of human capital and on concerted policies for food and nutrition, health and education with a strong, explicit focus on employment and poverty reduction.

The eradication of poverty must become an over-riding goal of policy, not a by-product of policies aimed at maximizing economic growth.

2) Abiding poverty is a consequence of the interplay of many factors and therefore a series

of disconnected, sectoral measures will not create the conditions for the eradication of poverty. A coherent and coordinated strategy will be essential to eradicate the underlying causes of poverty. Within the framework provided by such a strategy, sectoral policies for health and nutrition, education and employment, social cohesion and the prevention of violence for example, can become mutually reinforcing to create the foundations of a progressive and inclusive society.

3) To eradicate poverty, it will be essential to anticipate and mitigate the impacts of climate change and also the pressures of growing populations on fragile environments. Policies for national development must therefore be integrated with policies to anticipate and adapt to accelerating climate change within one coherent overall strategy, supported by a unified institutional structure for planning, decision-making and implementation.

4) Besides creating an effective framework of public policy, governments should also provide incentives and stimulus to support grassroots initiatives and innovation and to stimulate the efforts of civil society and the business community to create employment, to promote social cohesion and to improve the underlying conditions which will enable the society to reduce poverty.

5) A special and strong emphasis should be placed on the role of women who are of central importance in the practical economy, who contribute to cultural and social cohesion and who are often key to the prevention of violence.

6) Finally, we should return to the fundamental goal of capacity-building which was the focus of international policies in the 70s and 80s. The eradication of poverty will depend on the capacity of each country to manage a range of connected issues and to establish a sound framework of governance, law and human rights. It follows that training and education to create a new generation of competent and knowledgeable officials, educators and innovators and to

build a strong and progressive civil society must become a focus of national and international development policies.

If a sound framework of governance and policy can be maintained, then sustained programmes of education, health and nutrition for example can create a dynamic society capable of overcoming the problem of poverty.

At the international level, as I have emphasized, new strategies are urgently needed to support national efforts. The eradication of poverty must be given high priority as an integral part of mainstream economic policy. And, as at the national level, a coherent framework for strategy and action should be developed in which efforts in the different fields of international

Cooperation can be effectively concerted. The United Nations is well placed to take the lead in developing such a coherent approach to the eradication of poverty as a follow up to the first phase of the Millennium Development Goals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, poverty is the consequence of a complex web of underlying, economic, social, cultural and structural causes. A coherent strategy to address these underlying causes of poverty is needed, not disconnected policies to treat the symptoms. Within such a framework, targeted, sectoral interventions can then become mutually reinforcing.

Poverty reduction must become an explicit, priority focus of policy, including targeted policies for redistribution and for the generation of employment. This is both a moral imperative and a practical necessity if we are to preserve a world of progress and peace.

If we recognize this moral and practical imperative to eradicate the poverty of hundreds of millions of people, then it follows that substantial additional resources of all kinds must be generated and focused on this critical issue. We have seen how trillions of dollars were found to

preserve the international banking system and we can see that over \$1.5 trillion are expended annually on armaments. In comparison, official development assistance has reached around \$120 billion and the world community is struggling to find ways of providing \$100 billion per year to meet the challenges of climate change.

At this turning point in human affairs, we must seize the opportunity to focus international

attention on the overriding and attainable goal to eradicate poverty so that we no longer waste the creativity and potential contributions of hundreds of millions of people and create the conditions under which they can live healthy, safe, productive and fulfilling lives. It surely is not our purpose that men and women should be servants of the economy: it is the economy which should be at the service of humanity.

3. Civil Society Forum Workshops

The content of the workshops focuses on three areas that have proven to be effective means to the alleviation of poverty, when justly and equitably implemented.

The “interactive” dynamics was an effort on the part of forum planners to provide civil society attendees greater opportunity for active participation, input to the forum, and networking. Additionally, the workshop provided information for advocacy both at the United Nations and when back in their home countries.

Work Shop 1: Debt Cancellation — Human Dignity Demands It!

Facilitator: Barry Herman, The New School

Scribe: Anne Kelly, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Experts: Melinda St. Louis, Jubilee USA Network, and Shari Spiegel, UN-DESA

Melinda St. Louis: The Jubilee Campaign operated in 60 countries and civil society had a role to play in pushing governments to take on debt cancellation. Some 29 countries had received debt relief “up to a certain point.” Strong church leadership in the Global South had

made a significant contribution to the success of the Jubilee Campaign. NGOs were urged to build broad coalitions on a narrow, well defined issue, ensure that facts are correct and propose solutions.

Shari Spiegel: Briefly described the relationship between creditor and debtor countries that was contractual and made both sides responsible for the outcome. There was need for an overall debt cancellation framework for all countries.

Interactive: Some facts that emerged during the interactive discussion:

- 2010 the IMF estimated that 33 countries were in high debt crisis.
- The *IMF Debt Sustainability Analysis Report* was too optimistic.
- There was a recently launched campaign asking the G20 to support the creation of a fair debt court for over-indebted countries. Consult: www.defusethebtcrisis.org
- Efforts were being made to reform IMF policies and practices.
- If a country was not sustainable financially then it needed grants not loans.
- China and India reemerging as new lenders.

Work Shop 2: Microfinance — Human Dignity Demands It!

Facilitator: Winifred Doherty, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd

Scribe: Sylvia Picard-Schmitt,
World Christian Life Community

Experts: H.E. Josephine Ojiambo, Ambassador Deputy Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations; Susan Saiyorri, Jami Bora; Caroljean Willie, Microfinance Partners in Africa; Inez Murray, Women's World Banking.

Dr. Josephine Ojiambo enumerated some mechanisms that the Kenyan Government had in place to require microfinance organizations to meet standards, especially to protect persons seeking loans from such organizations. She identified a wide range of benefits that microfinance had provided: food, sanitation and education improvement, domestic violence and HIV infections have declined as women felt newly empowered and asserted their rights.

Susan Saiyorri stated that, “the poor are bankable” and that empowerment came from withing. *Jamii Bora* required that its members began to accumulate savings before they will receive help with credit. Microfinance has given the members of *Jamii Bora* a sense of dignity.

Caroljean Willie noted that the voices of the beneficiaries of microfinance were most persuasive, and were responsible for bringing in new members. *Inez Murray* called for voicing women's needs in health emergencies, education for children and housing; often women did not have their own voices. In addition to loans microfinance must offer savings and insurance. Responsible microfinance must yield good returns. There was a double bottom line: the client's well-being and a good return. She spoke of an evolution to “financial inclusiveness” as a key to joint responsibility of borrow and lenders. The condition of people living in poverty was not to be used by others as a way to generate money. Some models indicated that microfinance was sustainable but others pointed to the contrary.

Work Shop 3: Decent Work — Human Dignity Demands It

Facilitator: Patricia Connolly, Daughters of Charity

Scribe: Andrea Solazzo, Loretto Community

Experts: Jane Stewart, International Labor Organization; Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah, General Secretary, General Agricultural Workers Union, Ghana; Joycelyn Gill-Campbell, Organizer, Domestic Workers United.

Jane Stewart alerted the NGO Community that it was important to put the right to decent work and social protection on the agenda. Populations had different needs and were shaped by their own dynamics. It was important to understand visions and aspirations of people. Young people were more likely to be part of the working poor. Migrant workers, women, youth and other workers came from different sites of poverty to the workforce.

Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah mentioned grave inequities between different social sectors. A Key concern in the decent work agenda was the alleviation of poverty and mobility to a different social level. Social dialogue was needed to address inclusiveness and empowerment. In Ghana there was a large sector of the population engaged in the informal workforce.

Agricultural workers, especially the small farmers growing palm oil and cotton were organized. They tested new techniques, created policies to empower women. Policy engagement was vital to assisting people to move ahead. Trade liberalization had negatively impacted the sustainability of the small farmer.

Joycelyn-Gill Campbell explained how domestic workers in the New York State organized in 2000 to fight their rights. She stressed their successful campaign to gain social protection which was assured in the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights 2010. She urged ILO to place the situation of domestic workers on its agenda.

Commission for Social Development (CSocD)





Commission for Social Development (CSocD)

1. Chair's Summary on the priority theme: Poverty Eradication

Poverty eradication remains a major challenge for all governments and the United Nations system, especially in the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis. National governments and the international community remain committed to continued efforts at the national, regional and global levels to fulfill the commitments contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as the further initiatives for social development adopted by the General Assembly at its Twenty-Fourth Special Session.

Poverty eradication: progress and challenges Since the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, poverty eradication has become the overarching objective of development. However, poverty eradication has been uneven among countries and regions. Despite the impact of the global crises, including the rapid rise in food and fuel prices and the global financial and economic crisis, the world is still on track to meet the MDG 1 target of halving the proportion of the population living on less than \$1.25 a day by 2015. However, the achievement of the MDG poverty target is but one step towards the commitment to poverty eradication made at the World Summit on Social Development. There will be close to 900 million people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

While the forecasted declines in income poverty at the global and regional levels are encouraging, poverty remains high and intractable in many countries. Indeed, the global trend masks the dire reality in many countries where there has been slow or little progress in poverty

reduction. Much of the progress in reducing extreme poverty and raising living standards has been achieved in Eastern Asia, particularly in China. Other regions have been less successful. At the same time, regional trends conceal very different national experiences, even in those countries with similar income levels.

Extreme poverty is not simply a lack of adequate income, although the MDG poverty target is income-based. The Copenhagen outcome document strongly underscored the fact that individuals living in poverty experience multiple deprivations, restrictions in opportunities and social exclusion. While many countries have succeeded in reducing income poverty, they still face important challenges in ensuring access to education, health, food and other basic goods and services. For example, the number of undernourished people increased from 817 million in 1990-1992 to over 1 billion in 2009.

Health and education are vital to break the cycle of poverty and to prevent its intergenerational transmission. People living in poverty still face obstacles in accessing health care, and many die, often prematurely, from easily preventable diseases and health conditions. Diseases, in turn, can push vulnerable families into poverty. Education is widely recognized as a means for socioeconomic progress and lack of education often prevents people living in poverty from taking part in higher-paying formal sector employment. These linkages underline the vicious circle that exists between income poverty and poor health and low levels of education.

Gender and urban-rural disparities continue to hamper efforts to eradicate poverty.

Although there has been considerable progress in reducing gender inequality in the past three decades, women remain disadvantaged relative to men in most spheres of life. Gender inequality reflects social structure, culture and values and manifests itself in unequal opportunities and outcomes for girls and women. In addition, throughout the world there are large disparities in well-being between urban and rural residents. Poverty has been growing faster in urban areas, yet the incidence of poverty is still higher in rural areas.

Impact of crises on poverty eradication
Poverty eradication efforts have been further constrained by the economic and financial crisis, the food and fuel crises, as well as the impact of climate change. The economic crisis has so far led to sharp falls in employment and wages. Globally, the number of jobless persons is estimated to have reached 210 million in mid-2010, up from 178 million in 2007. The longer the distress in labour market persists, the more affected workers, their families and their communities run the risk of being trapped in long-lasting poverty. In this regard, the impact of the crisis on youth, who are disproportionately affected by unemployment and

overrepresented in low-wage jobs in the informal sector, is a major area of concern.

The multiple crises had slowed global progress in poverty eradication. Strains put on public expenditures by the crises further limit the fiscal capacity and scope of government policy to address poverty and overcome inequalities. The present trend towards fiscal contraction in many countries risk undermining the still fragile and uneven recovery, threatening to worsen social conditions even further. In order not to reverse the progress that has already been achieved, concerted efforts are needed to ensure a sustained and decent job-rich recovery.

Lessons learned

With less than five years remaining before the target date of 2015, actions to accelerate progress, building on successes and lessons learned, are especially pressing in those regions which lag behind in reducing poverty, and where social and economic inequalities remain high.

Countries face diverse economic, social and political challenges to achieving poverty eradication. Despite the diversity of challenges faced by countries in this regard, there is broad agreement among countries that rapid economic growth and macroeconomic stability are necessary but not enough for sustained poverty reduction.

2. Executive Summary: Promoting Social Integration: Voices from the Grassroots

In a survey conducted by the Non-Governmental Organization CONGO Committee for Social Development and the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) in the fall of 2010, 180 civil society organizations from 60 countries responded to three questions designed to reveal their awareness of the Resolution on Promoting Social Integration (E/CN.5/2011/1) and efforts made by their national governments to implement that resolution. The summary of the responses which follows reflects civil society's awareness of new policies and programmes introduced by their respective governments since the adoption of the Resolution.

More than 80% of the respondents reported at least some awareness of the Resolution. Respondents reported that a variety of different social protection programmes had been established but that few of them applied to those working in the informal sector. The largest section of this summary pointed to the concrete suggestions made by the respondents to enhance the implementation of the Resolution. The report contains results of the survey, providing responses from 60 countries from the five regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Western Asia. However, for the purpose of the executive summary, only concrete suggestions that were most often mentioned regardless of the regions from which they originated were listed:

1. To enforce existing laws and policies on promoting social integration: Many respondents highlighted concerns about implementation gaps in existing social policies and laws. They called for further evaluation and monitoring by civil society rather than promoting new social policies and laws. They called for actions to create decent employment that would result in the inclusion of previously marginalized persons into the formal sector workforce.
2. To enhance participation by civil society and grassroots: Civil society actors affirmed the importance of enhancing participation of all citizens to ensure the implementation of existing policies including the strengthening of local governance structures. Citizens should be at the heart of the process of designing and monitoring delivery of quality public services.
3. To ensure access to information: Local media should be used to pass on information among people living in remote areas and to raise awareness about rights and social policies. This would include the exchange of information and dialogue between political decision-makers and civil society leaders.
4. To eliminate corruption: Effective measures to eliminate corruption and address impunity among representatives of governments and development partners should be put in place including transparency in the areas of political campaign finance, resource management and programme funding.
5. To focus on equality between women and men: Respondents emphasized the need to promote equality between women and men from the following perspectives: protection against domestic and sexual violence and abuse, access to land, the right to inherit, access to health care, education, and participation in decision-making. Education of the girl-child and special programmes for women soldiers returning from the violence

of war were highlighted as was also the need for attention to families. Fair and gender-responsive legal systems were also identified as a need.

6. To focus on the most vulnerable segments of society in providing basic needs and services: Special attention should be given to the provision of basic needs, services and social protection to vulnerable populations. Groups identified included indigenous peoples, the unemployed, prisoners, people with disabilities, street children, older persons, persons living with HIV/AIDS, and all those living in extreme poverty in slums or rural areas. Further, people-centred investment and job creation were essential for long-term social and economic development.
7. To increase efforts to address societal divisions and human trafficking: Continued efforts needed to be undertaken to eliminate discrimination based on race, caste, religion and gender. The elimination of human trafficking was also identified as an important step to achieving social integration.
8. To address the needs of migrants and refugees: Respondents identified a need for fair policies to protect migrant workers and their families in both sending and receiving countries.
9. To promote aid effectiveness as a way to strengthen governance and improve development performance: Policies to tackle efficiency problems including monitoring during the execution of social projects were requested. Respondents mentioned specifically the implementation of existing agreements such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action.
10. To address the HIV/AIDS Pandemic: Respondents suggested that special focus be given to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and reiterated the importance of policies relating to the caring for persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.
11. Additional Suggestions: programmes for the reintegration of child, women and men soldiers into peacetime societies; enhanced debt relief in poor countries and promotion of microfinance as a source of employment and development; human rights-based approaches to poverty eradication and the importance of the Draft Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights; and implementation of policies to address the impact of climate change on poverty eradication.

3. NGOs Written Statements

NGOs in general and special consultative status with ECOSOC submitted twenty four written statements this year to the Commission for Social Development. Modalities for written statements to the Commission for Social Development are described in paragraphs 36 and 37 of ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 which can be consulted at

this link: <http://esango.un.org/paperless/Web?page=static&content=resolution>

NGOs written statements to the 49th Session of the Commission can be consulted at this link: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2011-ngo-stats.html>

4. NGOs Oral Statements

NGOs in general and special consultative status may make oral presentations during the general debate at the Commission. NGO representatives are advised to not orally present statements that are produced as documents of the Commission (written statements). Oral presentations should be related to the theme or sub-themes of the

session and made according to the programme of work of the session.

NGOs Oral statements to the 49th Session of the Commission can be consulted at this link: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2011-statements.html>

5. Side Events

NGOs in general and special consultative status organized side events such as workshops, panels and briefing discussions during the 49th Session of the Commission for Social Development. A complete list of side events of the 49th Session of the Commission for Social Development can

be consulted by visiting the following link: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2011/side-events.pdf>.

The summary of the side events can be consulted by visiting the following link: www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2011/side-events.pdf

Conclusion



Conclusion

The 49th session of the Commission for Social Development concluded its session by adopting five resolutions calling for wide-ranging steps, from support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the upcoming review of the action plan on ageing to

improving the situation of youth, persons with disabilities and families. The resolutions of the 49th session of the commission can be consulted by visiting the following link: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2011-resolutions.html>.

1. Rethinking the Role of Civil Society in Eradicating Poverty: Innovative solutions to fight global poverty:

- Partner with Governments and the private sector by investing and creating innovative practical solutions for the poor and marginalized people;
- Focus on sharing knowledge and best practices to help developing countries in developing and implementing its social policies to eradicate poverty;
- Empower Communities to eradicate poverty and promote social development
- Help governments to promote open, transparent governance and a justice system that is fair, restorative and equally available to all;
- Promote the Social Protection Floor Initiative which provides a minimum level of income and livelihood security for all ;
- Invest in innovation for education and health to have a quality education system that will help young people overcome poverty and make public health affordable to the poor;
- Improve social services programmes to make them more effective and targeted at the poor;
- Invest in youth, older people and persons with disabilities, including those in poverty, to participate fully in their society; they must have a standard of living that empowers them.

2. Looking Forward to the 50th Session of the Commission for Social Development — An NGO Perspective

With the publication of this report, you now have a presentation of the first cycle of civil society involvement in working towards the eradication of poverty at the Commission for Social Development. As always at the United Nations, when one session of a Commission is completed, we have to start thinking of the next almost immediately.

Civil Society is now looking forward to the policy session on the “Eradication of Poverty” of the Commission which will take place in February of 2012. Task forces of the NGO Committee for Social Development have been continuing to work following the 49th Session of the Commission. A preliminary set of policy recommendations for the 50th session have been prepared and a signature campaign to advance the establishment of national social protection floors as an effective way to eliminate extreme poverty has been launched. These can be accessed on the website at www.ngosocdev.net.

The Chair of the Committee was able to participate in two of the four expert group meetings held to prepare the content of the Secretary General’s reports for the 50th Commission Session. She presented a paper on *‘Enhancing the Role of NGOs in Poverty Alleviation: Challenges and Opportunities’* during the session on “Poverty eradication” and participated as an observer at the session on “The Challenge of building employment for a sustainable recovery.” (The other two topics with expert group meetings were “Assessing family policies: Confronting family poverty and social exclusion” and “Cooperatives in social development: Beyond 2012.”

The fact that these sessions assist in the preparation of the Secretary General’s various reports for the Commission meeting means that, where civil society is present, it helps shape the policy

debate that will take place at the Commission from very early in the process.

So, what are some of the themes that civil society can expect as substantive parts of the debate in 2012, themes around which written and oral interventions and pre-session and during session side events can be built to be relevant to government concerns?

Looking at the material presented at expert group meetings can be a guide to focusing the work of civil society. These can be found on the DESA website and downloaded to be studied at your convenience: <http://social.un.org/index/ExpertGroupMeetingsPanelDiscussions.aspx>.

From even a cursory examination of the topics at the expert group meeting on poverty eradication, it is clear that discussion will take place on human rights of persons living in extreme poverty, on governance in relationship to the actions of the State to eradicate poverty—particularly related to the market and the specific policy implementation, on the role of agriculture in relationship to rural poverty.

Finally, in examining some of the material related to beyond 2012, civil society can prepare itself for discussion even beyond the 50th session. As an example, we know that 2015 is the target date for achieving the Millennium development goals. What then? This discussion is already beginning at the United Nations and was included in the discussion at the June Expert Group meeting on Poverty Eradication. To be effective advocates, we have experienced that civil society needs to start early and then continue to follow up on these efforts before the session, during the session and beyond. We hope that in looking at the material of this booklet you will find some helps to understanding how to be effective in the role of Civil Society at the United Nations.

Annexes



Annexes

List of Bureau Members of the Commission for Social Development

Chairperson: H.E. Mr. Jorge Valero, Venezuela

Vice-Chairpersons:

Ms. Olisu Cifligu, Albania

Ms. Susanne Fries-Gaier, Germany

Mr. Eduardo Meñez, Philippines

Ms. Najla Abdelrahman, Sudan

Members of the NGO Committee for Social Development

Organization	Name
1. UNANIMA International	Catherine Ferguson
2. Pax Christi International	Elizabeth Begley
3. Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul	Germaine Price
4. International Presentation Association	Fatima Rodrigo
5. International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics (USA)	Juanita Carrillo
6. International Peace Research Association	Anita Wenden
7. Congregation of Notre Dame (CND)	Mary Corbett
8. International CURE	Rudy & Betty Cypser
9. Dominican Leadership Conference	Margaret Mayce
10. Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council	Lila Prounis
11. Loretto Community	Sally Dunne
12. International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics (France)	Jim Collins
13. Baha'I International Community	Tahirih Naylor
14. Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary	Rita Arthur
15. Marianists International	Steve O'Neil
16. Congregations of St. Joseph	Griselda Martinez Morales

continues

Organization (continued)	Name
17. School Sisters of Notre Dame	Ann Scholz
18. Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur	Joan Burke
19. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns	Marie Dennis
20. Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd	Winifred Doherty
21. International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)	Susan Sommers
22. Pace University-Dept of Pshchology	Yvonne Rafferty
23. Triglav Circle	Barbara Baudot
24. Salesian Missions	Tom Brennan
25. HelpAge	Stuart Wilson
26. Congregation of the Mission	Joe Foley
27. Sisters of Charity Federation	Caroljean Willie
28. Passionists International	Kevin Dance
29. Erlassjahr	Eva Hanfstaengl
30. International Kolping Society	John Reitter
31. Society of the Sacred Heart	Cecile Meijer
32. Vivat International	ZeliaCordeiro
33. ATD 4 th World	Cristina Diez
34. Mercy Global Concern	Deidre Mullan
35. Georgian Women in Business	Rita Arthur
36. IASSW	Lynne Healy
37. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate	Daniel LeBlanc
38. Christian Life Communities	Sylvia Picard Schmidt
39. SERFAC-Service & Research Foundation of Asia on Family & Culture	Catherine Bernard

Provisional List of Governments and UN Agencies

The Provisional List of Governments and UN Agencies to the 49th Session of the Commission for Social Development is available online by visiting the following link: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2011/participants.pdf>

Provisional List of NGOs *

The provisional list of NGOs that participated at the Commission for Social Development in 2011 is the following:

Non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

AARP
 Academic Council on the United Nations System
 Congregations of St. Joseph
 Franciscans International
 Geriatrics Care Foundation of Pakistan
 Global Action on Aging
 Global Helping to Advance Women and Children
 Goi Peace Foundation
 Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council of North and South America
 HelpAge International
 International Council on Social Welfare
 International Federation on Ageing
 International Movement ATD Fourth World
 Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities
 Soroptimist International
 Women's Federation for World Peace International
 World Federation of United Nations Associations

Non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Academy for Mobilizing Rural-Urban Action through Education
 Agricultural Missions, Inc.
 Al-Hakim Foundation
 Antonio Restrepo Barco Foundation
 Association of United Families International
 Baha'i International Community
 Baltic Sea Forum e.V.
 Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Senioren-Organisationen
 Center for Interethnic Cooperation
 Centre de Developpement Agro-Pastoral de Djolu
 Centre for Adivasee Studies & Peace
 Chabad — International Jewish Educational and Cultural Network
 Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
Congregation of Our Lady of Mount Carmel — Carmelite NGO
Dominican Leadership Conference
Environment Action Association
Foundation for Subjective Experience and Research
Foundation for the Rights of the Family (PRODEFA)
Hong Kong Council of Social Service
Institute for International Urban Development
International Association of Applied Psychology
International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics
International Association of Schools of Social Work
International Committee for Arab-Israeli Reconciliation
International Confederation for Family Support
International Federation of Social Workers
International Federation of Women in Legal Careers
International Institute for the Development of Citizenship (IIDAC)
International Kolping Society
International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Justice for All — Prison Fellowship Ethiopia
League of Women Voters of the United States
Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association
NGO Health Committee, Inc.
New Future Foundation, Inc.
Nigerian Army Officers' Wives Association
Partnership for Global Justice
Passionists International
PaxRomana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and International
Movement of Catholic Students)
Radin Institute for Family Health Education and Promotion (RIFHEP)
Salesian Missions, Inc.
Salvation Army, The
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture
Sisters of Charity Federation
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Social Development Center
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries
Sudan Council of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA)
SustainUS, Inc.
UNANIMA International
Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB)
United States Burn Support Organization
VIVAT International
Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo

World Federation for Mental Health
 World Student Christian Federation
 World Youth Alliance
 Yachay Wasi, Inc.

Non-governmental organizations on the roster

American Foundation of Savoy Orders
 Christian Blind Mission
 Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA)
 Gray Panthers
 Hope Medical Enterprises, Ltd.
 Loretto Community (Sisters of Loretto)
 World Christian Life Community
 World Federation of Public Health Associations
 Youth Enhancement Organization

* The following provisional list of participants for the Commission is based upon letters received as of 4 February 2011. Delegations are reminded to submit the composition of their delegation for the session through the Commission Secretary, Ms. Radhika Padayachi, 300 E 42nd St. New York, N.Y. 10017, Room IN-621; fax (212) 963-5935). Corrections or additions to the following list should also be sent to the Secretary.

Online Tools and Resources for NGOs

The Integrated Civil Society Organizations (iCSO)

- The integrated Civil Society Organizations (iCSO) System was developed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) to facilitate interactions between civil society organizations and DESA.
- It is a Web-based communication tool between Civil Society Organizations and DESA
- It can be used to create:
 - General profiles, including address, contacts and activities
 - Application for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
 - Quadrennial reports
 - Designations of UN representatives
 - Registration to UN conferences
- There are currently more than 15,000 organizations in the economic and social field in the database and information can be easily retrieved by using the simple or advanced search.
- It is available at <http://www.un.org/esa/civilsociety>
- An advanced search can be used to find out more about civil society organizations in iCSO. It allows many combinations, including by organization name and type, region and country, consultative status, language, geographic scope, fields of activity and meeting participation.

Civil Society Network (CSO.Net)

- The Civil Society Network (CSO.Net) is a web portal devoted to non-governmental organizations to facilitate online pre-registration to United Nations conferences open for civil society participation and allows for submission of NGO statements to the Economic and Social Council.
- CSO.Net portal gives NGOs the opportunity to publish news and to engage and moderate discussion forums.
- It is a knowledge-based, open networking platform designed to facilitate interaction among civil society groups worldwide, Member States and UN system agencies.
- The aim is to: share and promote best practices in the field of economic and social development; establish innovative and collaborative development solutions; facilitate partnerships among the users of the portal; and promote interactive discussions through online forums on issues of immediate relevance to the UN's agenda. This portal can be accessed at <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/csonet>.
- It provides numerous tools, sources of information and news about civil society and the UN that are designed, as much to inform you about the UN's work, and as much as to highlight and facilitate civil society contribution to the UN's development goals.

United Nations and Civil Society

- The United Nations is both a participant in and a witness to an increasingly global civil society. More and more, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations (CSOs) are UN system partners and valuable UN links to civil society. CSOs play a key role at major United Nations Conferences and are indispensable partners for UN efforts at the country level. NGOs are consulted on UN policy and programme matters. The UN organizes and hosts, on a regular basis, briefings, meetings and conferences for NGO representatives who are accredited to UN offices, programmes and agencies.

The United Nations and Civil Society resource website can be consulted at this link: <http://www.un.org/en/civilsociety/index.shtml>

- Department of Public Information Non-Governmental Organizations (DPI-NGO):** The NGO Relations Cluster is the link to over 1,500 Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) associated with the Department of Public Information and supports their efforts to interact effectively with the United Nations in their areas of expertise. The Cluster is also responsible for facilitating the exchange of information and developing partnerships with civil society. It plays a coordinating role within the UN Secretariat to reach out to civil society partners around the world and enhance their interaction with, and understanding of, the work of the UN.

The DPI NGO website can be consulted at this link:
<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/dpingorelations/home>

- **The Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)** promotes dynamic partnerships between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. By providing information, advice, expertise and support services, NGLS is part of the UN's effort to strengthen dialogue and win public support for economic and social development.

The NGLS website can be consulted at this link:

<http://www.un-ngls.org/>

- **The UN Democracy Fund (UNDF)** was established by the Secretary-General in July 2005 as a UN General Trust Fund. Supported by 36 Member States, its chief function is funding projects that strengthen the voice of civil society in democratic processes around the world. The large majority of UNDEF funds go to local civil society organizations -- both in the transition and consolidation phases of democratization.

The UN Democracy Fund website can be consulted at this link:

<http://www.un.org/democracyfund/>

- **The NGO Branch of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)** is the focal point within the United Nations Secretariat for non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and for NGOs seeking status. The NGO Branch services the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, a subsidiary body of the ECOSOC composed of 19 Member States. It also provides relevant advice and information concerning NGOs to representatives of the United Nations system, Member States and civil society.

The NGO Branch of DESA website can be consulted at this link:

<http://csonet.org>

The present report provides an overview of how civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were involved in the work of the 49th Session of the Commission for Social Development, which was held in 2011 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. By highlighting how CSOs and NGOs can be involved in the substantive work of the Commission, the report intends to offer guidance to new NGOs on how to work with the United Nations on social development issues.

The report comprises two main sections relating to the participation of NGOs in the Commission for Social Development. It contains annexes listing the members of the Bureau of the Commission, members of the NGO Committee for Social Development, its participants and UN-DESA online tools for NGOs.

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