



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 November 2023

English only

Commission for Social Development

Sixty-first session

5–14 February 2024

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:**

**Priority Theme: “Fostering social development and social
justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the
implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development and to achieve the overarching goal of
poverty eradication”**

Statement submitted by International Federation of Social Workers, non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The International Federation of Social Workers is committed to fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the overarching goal of poverty eradication.

The federation encompasses 141 country-members and strives for social justice, human rights, sustainable social development through social work best practices and engagement in international cooperation. Our 2021 Policy Statement, Social Work and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, affirms our support for, and role in, achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through sharing knowledge and continuing to collaboratively create and establish solutions that promote social change and social development. We stand against exploitation of people and nature and against unjust structures that allow for wealth concentration in the hands of the few.

Our collaborative work with diverse partners from professional organizations, trade unions, and social movement groups resulted in the People's Charter for an Eco-social World in 2022. Collectively, we promote co-building a new eco-social world that is grounded in a holistic human rights framework and inclusive of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, ecosystem rights and the broader rights of nature. No one is left behind!

The People's Charter for an Eco-social World provides a roadmap for achieving the Priority Theme. This roadmap encompasses the process of expanding beyond the usual professional and advocacy silos to work with diverse professional associations, social movement groups, UN partner UNRISD, and trade unions to collectively identify collective solutions. Shared problems of global inequality, crisis and conflict, the climate emergency, and global inflation require working beyond silos in coordinated global and local efforts where voices from the bottom-up can actively participate in realizing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

Global Poverty

Despite post-2020 economic growth, global poverty has risen. Ninety-six percent of the global population had a surge in extreme poverty despite economic growth within countries while the carbon intensity of GDP is projected to have increased in a third of countries (UNDP, 2023). The combination of increased poverty and increased carbon emissions as GDP is rising points to the reality that economic growth alone is not a route to the eradication of poverty. An increase in jobs alone is not a solution to tackling poverty as one in five of the global working population are the working poor (UNDP, 2023). Increased carbon emissions accelerate the progression of climate change which increases poverty, hunger, and poor health (World Meteorological Association, 2023).

Poverty is also increasing at alarming rates in highly indebted countries and is correlated with insufficient social spending. Between 2020–2023, 165 million people fell into poverty due to debt servicing costs. Forty-six countries pay more than 10 percent of their general government revenue on net interest payments. Debt servicing is making it increasingly harder for countries to support their populations through investments in health, education, and social protection (UNDP, 2023).

To accelerate progress on the 2030 agenda by fostering social justice and social policies for the overarching goal of eradicating poverty, it is essential to promote the right to development inclusive of jobs that provide decent work, social protection systems accessible to all, and support the solidarity economy as a pathway to decent

work. These solutions must ensure work that does no harm to individuals or the environment.

Right to Development

The overarching goal for eradicating poverty can only be achieved in realizing the right to development within planetary bio-physical boundaries. International Federation of Social Workers Statement on the Draft Convention on the Right to Development (2021) supports the draft convention and views it as a bridging tool between human rights and the 2030 Agenda based on active participation of the people (rights-holders), while holding the duty-bearers (the states) and international community accountable.

Sustainable development can be delivered only if decent work, sustained growth, and environmental integrity are advanced simultaneously and extended to all, including populations historically excluded from the economy.

Decent Work and Social Protections

Decent work (SDG 8) must encompass social protections; this is crucial for achieving economic stability and providing individuals with social identity, dignity, and self-respect. Central to achieving decent work that does no harm to humans or the environment is the protection of labor rights and the promotion of safe and secure working environments which foster skills that are valued in labor markets. Care work must be recognized as a form of decent work and properly compensated in order to tackle the feminization of poverty.

The investment in nature-based solutions that provide decent work has the prospect of creating twenty million new jobs, particularly in rural areas (ILO, 2023). Nature-based solutions buffer the impacts of climate change.

Social protections must be available to all. In the People's Charter, there is a call for co-creating social justice through building on organic community systems that have provided support between family, friends, and co-workers for generations, through promoting mutual responsibility between people and their environments. State-funded formal social systems have largely been created to respond to individual needs after a crisis has occurred. The strength of organic, community-based, preventative systems should be integrated with state systems to enhance human and planetary flourishing.

Social Solidarity Economy

In accordance with the People's Charter, economic profit should not be a guiding factor in co-building an eco-social world, rather we must focus on collective wellbeing. Solutions rooted in the social solidarity economy movement can generate income and alleviate poverty in ways that focus on smaller scale, community-level projects emphasizing people and environment.

The UN Resolution, *Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development* (2023, April 18) recognizes that the social and solidarity economy contributes to the achievement of the SDGs. The Resolution highlights the crucial link between the social solidarity economy and decent labor markets that result in the creation of more inclusive economic systems. Ensuring that workers are included in participatory processes, treated with dignity, and have access to social protections, reduces inequities and enhances the overall wellbeing of people.

Social workers from the National Association of Social Workers in the Democratic Republic of Congo have made significant strides towards economic empowerment in the Luvungi village, despite the ongoing conflict. The

implementation of an agriculture project has led to financial autonomy for 50 predominantly women-led farming households. This project has empowered the village economically, an example of the social solidarity economy, and has also resulted in increased food sustainability and improved nutrition for many.

Recommendations

In order to foster social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication, engagement from all local, national and global stakeholders is required. The International Federation of Social Workers makes the following recommendations:

- Support the right to development within planetary boundaries honoring ground-up decision-making.
- Join with unions and social movements to co-work with governments, public services and the business sector in implementing fair practices and agreed international standards to secure sustainable and fair markets that will foster recognition and respect in people's lives.
- Support cooperatives and enterprises that conduct nature-based solutions, and core labor standards such as fair wages and safety navigate the implementation of decent work through nature-based solutions.
- Strengthen organic, community-based, preventative systems to be integrated with state systems to enhance human and planetary flourishing.
- Co-build new frameworks and progress indicators with governments and people's assemblies that address the integration of markets and wellbeing.
- Invest in a new strategy of co-building social protection systems, health, education, and other social services to co-design preventative and responsive support systems that fulfill the rights and meet the needs of people.
