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SAMPLE REPORT

COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION

(MODIFIED FROM REPORT OF THE FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF CSD
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Executive Summary

At its forty-seventh session, held on 22 February 2008 and 4 to 13 February 2009, the Commission for Social Development considered "Social integration," the priority theme for the 2009-2010 review cycle, and the review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups.

On the priority theme, the Commission held a panel discussion elaborating on social integration, taking into account the relationship with poverty eradication, full employment and decent work for all, and engaged in an interactive dialogue with the Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers Programme. The Commission adopted a resolution entitled "Promoting full employment and decent work for all" and decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development." During the panel discussion, under the agenda item entitled "Emerging issues," the Commission discussed the current global crises and their impact on social development.

The first chapter of this report submits for consideration the above mentioned resolution concerned with Africa's New Partnership for Development and also asks that the nominations enumerated be made for the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

The second chapter details the discussions from the panel on social integration. The panel hosted lively debate over a wide range of topics as they related to social integration. The Commission discussed a great deal of obstacles and potential solutions to them. As a result of the forum, the Commission was able to accept and offer the resolution and nominations in Chapter One.

The third chapter offers the Commission's resolution on full employment that was one specific example of where its members were able to come to agreement and codify the Commission's position.

The last chapter details the acceptance of this report for the Council's consideration.

I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

The Commission for Social Development recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Draft resolution I

Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world," held in Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000,

Reaffirming the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000, the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development of 16 September 2002, General Assembly resolution 57/7 of 4 November 2002 on the final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Noting the conclusions of the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa held in Ouagadougou on 8 and 9 September 2004,

Recognizing the commitments made in meeting the special needs of Africa at the 2005 World Summit, and contained in the political declaration adopted on 22 September 2008 at the high-level meeting held at United Nations Headquarters to address Africa's development needs,

Remaining concerned that Africa is the only continent currently not on track to achieve any of the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration by 2015, and in this regard emphasizing that concerted efforts and continued support are required to fulfill the commitments to address the special needs of Africa,

Expressing deep concern that attainment of the social development objectives may be hindered by the financial crisis, as well as challenges brought about by the ongoing food and energy crises,

Recognizing that capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and best practices are essential for the successful implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and recognizing also the need for continued support from the international community,

Bearing in mind that African countries have primary responsibility for their own economic and social development, that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized and that their development efforts need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment, and in this regard recalling the support given by the International Conference on Financing for Development to the New Partnership,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;
2. *Welcomes* the progress made by the African countries in fulfilling their commitments in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development to deepen democracy, human rights, good governance and sound economic management, and encourages African countries, with the participation of stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to intensify their efforts in this regard by developing and strengthening institutions for governance and creating an environment conducive to attracting foreign direct investment for the development of the region;
3. *Also welcomes* the good progress that has been achieved in implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism, as reflected in particular by the number of countries that have signed up to participate in the Mechanism, the completion of the peer review process in some countries, the progress in implementing the recommendations of those reviews in some countries and the completion of the self-assessment process, the hosting of country support missions and the launching of the national preparatory process for the peer review in others, and urges African States that have not yet done so, to join the peer review, as a matter of priority, and to strengthen the peer review process so as to ensure its efficient performance;
4. *Welcomes in particular* the organization of the first session of the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development, and recalls in this regard the African Common Position on Social Integration and the Social Policy Framework for Africa, which has been endorsed by Africa's Heads of State;
5. *Welcomes* the efforts made by African countries and regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union, to mainstream a gender perspective and the empowerment of women in the implementation of the New Partnership, including the implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa;

6. *Emphasizes* that the African Union and the regional economic communities have a critical role to play in the implementation of the New Partnership, and in this regard encourages African countries, with the assistance of their development partners, to increase and coordinate effectively their support for enhancing the capacities of these institutions and to promote regional cooperation and social and economic integration in Africa;

7. *Also emphasizes* that progress in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development depends also on a favorable national and international environment for Africa's growth and development, including measures to promote a policy environment conducive to private sector development and entrepreneurship;

8. *Further emphasizes* that democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society, and effective participation by civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in particular community-based organizations, and the private sector are among the indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centered sustainable development;

9. *Emphasizes* that the increasingly unacceptable high poverty levels and social exclusion faced by most African countries require a comprehensive approach to the development and implementation of social and economic policies, inter alia, to reduce poverty, to promote economic activity, growth and sustainable development to ensure employment creation and decent work for all, to promote education and health, and to enhance social inclusion, political stability, democracy and good governance and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, so as to ensure the achievement of Africa's social and economic objectives;

10. *Recognizes* that while social development is primarily the responsibility of governments, international cooperation and assistance are essential for the full achievement of that goal.

B. Other recommendations for action by the Council

The Commission recommends that representatives from the following candidate nations be nominated to the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development for the accompanying terms:

- (a) France for a term beginning on 1 July 2009 and expiring on 30 June 2011;
- (b) Turkey, India, Brazil and Hungary for a term beginning on the date of confirmation by the Council and expiring on 30 June 2013.

II. Consideration of Social Integration

At its second to thirteenth meetings, from 4 to 13 February 2009, the Commission considered agenda item 3, the priority theme: social integration.

For its consideration of this item the Commission had before it the following documents:

- (a) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth: progress and constraints with respect to the well being of youth and their role in civil society (A/64/61-E/2009/3);
- (b) Report of the Secretary-General on promoting social integration (E/CN.5/2009/2);
- (c) Report of the Secretary-General on the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2009/3);
- (d) Report of the Secretary-General on promoting full employment and decent work for all (E/CN.5/2009/4).

A. Deliberations

Social integration is a process that strengthens the cohesion of societies through the inclusion of all people into a society and its decision-making. Cohesion increases security in its comprehensive meaning. At the same time, inclusion of all population groups strengthens the development potential of societies. Social integration is thus a prerequisite for fostering stable, safe, harmonious, peaceful and just societies so as to create an optimal basis for dynamic development and progress. Integration policies promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Social integration and the cohesion of societies can be achieved only if development is just and sustainable economically, socially, and environmentally.

The global financial and economic crisis, and volatile food and energy prices, as well as climate change, pose a serious threat to hard-earned advances made in social development in recent years. They will undoubtedly have major negative implications for social development in general and societal cohesion in particular, unless the international community takes a comprehensive approach to finding a joint solution to the current crises.

The second half of 2008 saw the start of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The impact of the crisis on the economy seriously diminishes economic prospects for 2009. Despite the announcement of several large-scale stimulus plans, short-term contractions are inevitable. The confluence of crises on multiple fronts has created a global environment of diminished growth prospects with a high degree of uncertainty. It may take months or even years for economic recovery to occur. This situation

threatens to reverse progress towards achieving internationally agreed development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals.

Contractions in economic activities are expected to lead to significantly higher levels of unemployment and worsen labor-market conditions for workers, who were facing increasing economic insecurity even during the period of robust economic growth. Slowing or even negative economic growth with volatile commodity prices will put great downward pressure on workers' real wages. Unemployment and lower wages in combination with volatile food and energy prices are adding tens of millions to the ranks of people living in poverty worldwide.

Increases in global food and energy prices in the first half of 2008 led to food protests in many developing countries and caused some countries to impose export restrictions. Many poor countries are net importers of food and energy and they saw their import bills balloon in 2008. People living in poverty will suffer most from the global crises owing to high food prices, falling incomes and unemployment. The number of people suffering from hunger is increasing.

These crises are unfolding against the background of the longer-term predicament of climate change. Climate change and its economic, environmental and social impacts will pose an unprecedented challenge to the cohesion of societies and the stability of international relations unless mitigative and adaptative measures are implemented in an equitable manner. Climate change, manifested in increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather patterns and natural disasters, is impacting agriculture and food production and exacerbating the food crisis. It is also likely to increase the risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases, cause the emergence of new diseases resulting from ecosystem changes, and produce changes in vector-borne diseases such as malaria, thereby posing additional challenges to health systems.

Mitigating the impact of the crises on social development will require creating short- and long-term policies that are comprehensive and consistent, while recognizing that social, economic and environmental policies must be coordinated and must complement each other. Reducing social spending may be tempting in the short run, but the long-term implications would likely be counterproductive. Indiscriminate reductions in social spending should be avoided, as they would very probably lead to irreversible losses of human and social capital and also compromise long-term economic development.

In the current phase of globalization, labor markets may create greater economic insecurity and inequity, which have a direct adverse effect on social cohesion in many societies. Unemployment, underemployment and poverty lead to social exclusion. Moreover, socio-demographic changes such as rapid urbanization, population aging, increased

migration, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the break-up of family structures pose particular challenges to social integration.

Social exclusion has multiple dimensions. Economic aspects of exclusion encompass exclusion from both the labor market and the access to assets. Social and cultural aspects entail exclusion from access to basic social security and services including education, health and housing, means of communication, and lack of access to justice. Such economic, social and cultural exclusion leads to political exclusion, whereby individuals are prevented from exercising their rights as citizens, including participation in the decision-making process. Besides poverty, other major causes of exclusion include income inequalities, unequal rural/urban development, unequal distribution of assets, such as land, and direct or indirect discrimination based on gender, race, disability or ethnicity.

Gender discrimination is one of the most prevalent and pervasive forms of institutionalized inequality. Gender, which cuts across all other social categories, is a marker of identity and the basis of inequalities between men and women in all societies. Just as gender discrimination is a grave obstacle to social integration, advancing gender equality should be considered a key measure for achieving social integration.

It is necessary to take concrete steps to prevent social exclusion and combat all forms of discrimination. For instance, adequate education can empower the impoverished and other vulnerable social groups to participate in political, economic and social activities. It can expand the range of their life choices and can aid them in breaking free of the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Similarly, it is critical to improve health systems around the world, particularly those that serve infants, pregnant women, older persons and persons with disabilities. In developing countries, 9.6 million children under age five lose their lives every year from avoidable causes, such as infectious diseases and malnutrition. Vaccine supplies should be increased and sanitary conditions should be improved. The provision of medical care for the increasing numbers of older persons is likewise a growing concern.

It has to be recognized that there is no "one size fits all" solution for social integration at the national level, as most countries have developed their own policies and programmes for social integration. This multidimensional concept needs to be well understood and addressed.

Since the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, international efforts to advance social integration have addressed the special needs of certain social groups, which led to the adoption of new mandates and instruments, such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Optional Protocol to the International

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

These instruments have proved to be pivotal in building important foundations for minimizing exclusion and guaranteeing the equal access to opportunities of all social groups, particularly when they are being translated into domestic laws and legislation and national policies and programmes. The emphasis on the social groups is meant to redress inequalities between and among groups and promote an intergenerational perspective as well as counter such ills as racism, sexism and ageism.

However, addressing the special needs of social groups, while critical, is not sufficient to achieve the broad social integration paradigm endorsed by the World Summit for Social Development. Beyond helping all groups and individuals to gain access to society, social integration requires the transformation of those social norms and principles that underpin unequal relations. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that not all social groups are necessarily looking to be mainstreamed or integrated into the larger society. Rather, they do wish to be included, but in a way that enables them to maintain their ethnic and cultural identities. In this regard, respecting diversity and accommodating people with different backgrounds are key to achieving social integration.

Realizing the objectives of “a society for all” requires commitment and social solidarity on the part of all members and sectors of society. There is a need for strong political leadership, transparent decision-making, social innovation and timely action. However, political commitment must be translated into concrete actions in order to operationalize social integration, and to keep it high in the list of priorities, even during times of crisis. The current crises will not only pose challenges for our societies, but also provide an opportunity to underscore the importance of social integration and to focus further on advancing equal and all-inclusive social development. There is a need for action-oriented policies and programmes that produce concrete outcomes. These policies and programmes should be evidence-based, supported by policy-relevant research, and followed up with systematic evaluation of results.

Each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development. National policies and development strategies should include the promotion of social integration and cohesion. The dialogue on the feasibility of “a global social floor” should be continued and options should be further elaborated and assessed. Encouraging progress is being made. For instance, the African Common Position on Social Integration, along with the Social Policy Framework for Africa and a Declaration on Social Development, was endorsed by the African Union in 2009.

A conducive international environment, in particular enhanced international cooperation, including fulfillment of commitments to provide internationally agreed official development assistance (0.7 per cent of gross domestic product), debt relief, market access and technical support, is crucial to the support of national efforts towards promoting social integration. Cooperation and coordination at the international level are imperative for combating the effects of the global crises. Official development assistance commitments should not be neglected. Global social justice should be seen as a global public good that is beneficial to all. The international community should take a comprehensive approach to finding a solution to the crises. At the same time, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The international community and development partners, especially the institutions and donors financing development, are encouraged to increase international cooperation for development and effectively support national efforts to implement social development agendas. South-South cooperation, international cooperation in capacity development and general exchange of good practices are essential to promoting social integration. Regional cooperation in this respect is often cost-effective and results in appropriate policy models and applications.

Several Member States and non-governmental representatives present requested that the following policy statements be included in this commission's report:

The representative from Angola, proud member of the African Union, reiterates support for the African Common Position on Social Integration and requests that this approach be the primary one when assisting African States in authoring national policies that further social integration.

The representative from South Africa noted the success of various national programs that have been undertaken over the last three decades to foster an increased understanding among its various populations to strengthen the national response to its past.

Representatives from Guatemala and Argentina echoed the achievements reached through similar reconciliation programs that demonstrate forward movement can come from personal interaction and understanding. Along with South Africa, these States offered support to other States facing similar circumstances and offered training as a means of South-South cooperation.

Representatives from the Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Bangladesh concur that proper consideration must be given by this Commission when suggesting social policies with regard to existing social and religious expectations.

The representative from the United States remains committed to the promotion of democracy as a vehicle to ensure social integration, because citizens who have a say in their

governance will better reflect the shape that social integration would best flourish in that nation.

The representative from Japan expressed concerns for States whose populations are unbalanced, notably those with aging populations. These States must commit to finding innovative methods to enhance the lives of the elderly that balance with the ability of the States to provide for all citizens.

The representative from UNICEF asked that childhood disease is highly preventable and strongly encourages States to take advantage of their knowledge when formulating national campaigns to eradicate childhood illness.

The representative from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern for the impediments of warfare and armed conflict that prevent that office and other UN offices from being able to execute their goals in certain regions. Roadblocks thrown up by local and national governments, paramilitary and warlords' personal armies continue to prevent progress in social integration among many other areas.

B. Action taken by the Commission

At the 11th meeting, on 12 February, the representative of the Sudan, on behalf of the Member States of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development." At the 13th meeting, on 13 February, the representative of the Sudan, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced revisions to the draft resolution, which were circulated in an informal paper, and announced that Finland, Poland and Sweden had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Subsequently, Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, as revised.

At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft resolution as revised for recommendation to the Council. Panel discussions on the priority theme were held as an ongoing forum.

A resolution promoting work opportunities as a means of social integration was also considered and adopted by the body by consensus.

III. Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission at its 2009 session

CSD/I/1: Promoting full employment and decent work for all

The Commission for Social Development,

Recalling the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly,

Reaffirming that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and the further initiatives for social development, adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session, and a continued global dialogue on social issues, constitute a basic framework for the promotion of social development for all at the national and international levels,

Recognizing that a people-centered approach must be at the center of economic and social development,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/18 of 24 July 2008 on promoting full employment and decent work for all, *Recalling further* General Assembly resolution 63/230 of 19 December 2008 on the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017),

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;
2. *Reaffirms* the central importance of full and productive employment and decent work to poverty reduction and social integration;
3. *Decides* to keep full and productive employment and decent work for all under review, and requests the Secretary-General to include a section on the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/18, and on the linkage between full employment and decent work for all and social integration, and the impact of the current world financial and economic crisis on full employment and decent work for all and social integration, in his report on the main theme of social integration to be submitted to the Commission for Social Development at its forty-eighth session.

IV. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-seventh session

At its meeting on 13 February 2009, the draft report of the Commission was made available for consideration. The Commission considered the report, and with no amendments, adopted the report by consensus.