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### ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

#### The Social Forum

**Report of the Chairperson-Rapporteur, José Bengoa, in  
accordance with Sub-Commission resolution 2005/8  
and Human Rights Council decision 2006/102\*\***

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\* Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 entitled “Human Rights Council”, all mandates, mechanisms, functions and responsibilities of the Commission on Human Rights, including the Sub-Commission, were assumed, as of 19 June 2006, by the Human Rights Council. Consequently, the symbol series E/CN.4/Sub.2/\_, under which the Sub-Commission reported to the former Commission on Human Rights, has been replaced by the series A/HRC/Sub.1/\_ as of 19 June 2006.

\*\* The annexes to the present document are being circulated in the original language only.

## **Summary**

The present report presents a summary of discussion and recommendations of the fourth social forum which was held in Geneva on 3 and 4 august 2006. The Social forum, in accordance with Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights resolution 2005/8 and Human Rights Council decision 2006/102, focused on “The fight against poverty and the rights to participation: the role of women”, as well as the future of expert advice to the Sub-Commission. In addition to experts of the Sub-Commission who are members of the social forum, representatives of several Member States and observer States, several specialized agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations attended the meeting and participated in the discussions.

The first day of the social Forum consisted of two panel discussions entitled: “The feminization of poverty: causes, effects and solutions”, and “Women, employment and empowerment through participation”. Panelists included representatives of grass-roots organizations as well as gender specialists from different international organizations. Each panel discussion was followed by a plenary discussion session. The conclusions and recommendations emanating from these discussions are presented in this report.

During the second day, the morning session was dedicated to a discussion of the draft guiding principles “Extreme poverty and human rights: the rights of the poor” prepared by the ad hoc expert group on the need to develop guiding principles on the implementation of existing human rights norms and standards in the context of the fight against extreme poverty. The afternoon session focused on implementation of Human Rights Council decision 2006/102 which called upon the Forum to contribute to the paper by the Sub-Commission on the Sub-Commission on its vision and recommendations for future expert advice to the council. There was a consensus among members of the Forum and the participants that the Social Forum, as a unique and open body which brings fresh perspective and ideas to the United Nations human rights system, should be preserved under the new council and its future expert advice mechanism.

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## **Introduction**

1. The Social Forum is an initiative of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Commission on Human Rights decision 2001/103 of 25 April 2001 authorized the Sub-Commission to hold the Social Forum. Commission on Human Rights decision 2003/107 of 22 April 2003 recommended that the Economic and Social Council authorize the Sub-Commission to convene in Geneva an annual intersessional forum on economic, social and cultural rights, to be known as the “Social Forum”. Economic and Social Council decision 2003/264 of 23 July 2003 endorsed this recommendation and as a result the Social Forum has been held annually since 2004. To date, three Social Forum sessions (2002, 2004 and 2005) have been organized following one preliminary meeting in 2001.
2. At its fifty-seventh session the Sub-Commission adopted resolution 2005/8, in which it decided that the theme for the fourth Social Forum 2006 would be “The fight against poverty and the right to participation: the role of women”.
3. The Human Rights Council in its decision 2006/102 of 30 June 2006 decided to extend, for one year, all mandates, mechanisms, functions and responsibilities of the Commission on Human Rights, including the Social Forum. The Human Rights Council also decided that the Social Forum should contribute to a Sub-Commission paper “on the Sub-Commission’s record that gives its own vision and recommendations for future expert advice to the Council, to be submitted to the Council in 2006”.

## **I. ORGANIZATION AND OPENING OF THE SESSION**

4. The fourth Social Forum took place on 3 and 4 August 2006 in Geneva during the fifty-eighth session of the Sub-Commission. The following members of the Social Forum and experts of the Sub-Commission, in accordance with its decision 2005/113, participated: Christy Mbonu and Ibrahim Salama (African Group), Chin-Sung Chung and Abdul Sattar (Asian Group), Iulia-Antoanella Motoc (Eastern European Group), José-Bengoa (Latin American Group) and Gudmunda Alfredsson and Marc Bossuyt (Western European and Other States Group). In addition, Yozo Yokota was invited to make a presentation.
5. The session was attended by members of the Sub-Commission, by observers for States Members of the United Nations, by observers for non-member States and by observers for intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, and other organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The attendance list is given in annex IV to the present report.
6. The Social Forum consisted of five sessions. The first day (sessions 1 to 3) was devoted to the theme of women and poverty. The first panel discussion addressed “The feminization of poverty: causes, effects and solutions”. The second panel discussion addressed “Women, employment and empowerment through participation”, separately focusing on two interrelated areas: “Women and employment” and the “Empowerment of women through participation”. The third session was held in plenary and discussed draft conclusions and recommendations. Sessions 4 and 5 took place during the second day. Session four was organized as a panel discussion focusing on the discussion of the draft guiding principles on “Extreme poverty and human rights: the right of the poor” prepared by the ad hoc expert group on the need to develop

guiding principles on the implementation of existing human rights norms and standards in the context of the fight against extreme poverty. Session 5 concentrated on the “Vision and recommendations for expert advice to the Human Rights Council: the future of the Social Forum”. A list of background documents is attached as annex I and the programme of the Social Forum is attached as annex II to the present report.

7. The panels were constituted as follows:

(a) Session 1: Tsegga Gaim (National Union of Eritrean Women), Joanna Koch (Associated Country Women of the World), Kalyani Menon-Sen (Jagori, India), Ana Maria Olmedo Ramos (Franciscans International Guatemala);

(b) Session 2: Edith Ballantyne (Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom), Teresa Genta-Fons (World Bank), Mary Kwar (International Labour Office), Saadia Zahidi (World Economic Forum);

(c) Session 4: José Bengoa (member of the Social Forum), Peter Prove, (Lutheran World Federation), Yozo Yokota (member of the Sub-Commission), Thierry Viard, ATD-Fourth World.

8. The Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mehr Khan Williams, opened the Social Forum. She underlined the important role played by the Forum in providing an opportunity to discuss the impact of poverty and destitution on the realization of human rights among representatives of the most vulnerable groups, civil society, States and intergovernmental organizations. This year’s theme had to be analysed in the context of the Millennium Development Goals, especially goal 1 (the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger) and goal 3 (the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women), as gender equality was crucial for their achievement. Numerous means were available to improve the situation of women living in poverty and end the vicious circle of poverty. In addition to devoting a special effort to gender mainstreaming, the United Nations and its specialized agencies promoted and enforced the international human rights conventions and declarations (such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)). Action was now necessary to promote the achievement of those Goals. She recalled that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was strongly committed to eliminating the challenges that undermine the fight against poverty, in particular those affecting women. The Deputy High Commissioner highlighted that the diverse composition of the Forum reflected the need for a broad partnership to fight against poverty and promote women’s rights. She encouraged grass-roots organizations, States and intergovernmental organizations to complement each others’ efforts.

9. In accordance with Sub-Commission resolution 2005/8, the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had been invited to make a presentation; however, she was unable to attend.

10. Mr. Bengoa was elected Chairperson.

11. Taking the chair, the Chairperson thanked the Deputy High Commissioner for her introduction and for bringing a number of issues and challenges to the attention of the participants. He then briefly outlined the recent events that had marked the organization of the Social Forum and especially the uncertainty related to the reform of the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary. He also thanked the Secretariat for having organized the Forum on such short notice. He reminded participants that, while poverty was a topic present in most international debates, rarely was analysed in relation to human rights, as done at the Social Forum. The growing gap between the rich and the poor in developing and developed countries, the unequal distribution of wealth and increasing rural poverty were concerns of particular interest to the Forum's members. He recalled that the choice of this year's topic, women and poverty, lay in two worrying phenomena. Firstly, poverty affected mainly women and girls as several forms of discrimination rendered them more vulnerable. Secondly, the majority of the events organized to discuss women and poverty at the international level rarely involved poor women or grass-roots organizations able to represent them. He invited participants to actively contribute during the sessions by sharing their ideas and comments on feminization of poverty.

12. The provisional agenda (A/HRC/Sub.1/58/SF/1) was adopted.

### **Part One: Thematic issue of the year**

## **II. SESSION 1: THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY: CAUSES, EFFECTS AND SOLUTIONS**

13. The Chairperson, acting as the moderator of the session, invited Ms. Chung to present her working paper, "The Challenge of Women's participation in policies and Strategies to Combat Poverty and Extreme Poverty" (A/HRC/Sub.1/58/SF.3). Ms. Chung explained that the term "feminization of poverty" referred to the situation of the growing proportion of women living below the poverty line. The concept of the feminization of poverty took into account quantitative and qualitative indicators, such as income poverty and deep-rooted institutional barriers respectively. Social indicators, among which were access to health care, maternal mortality rate, literacy, primary and secondary school enrolment, access to land and employment, and wage differentials, contributed to explaining why women were caught in the vicious cycle of poverty.

14. Ms. Chung warned of the need to address the deeply rooted causes of the feminization of poverty and not only the visible effects of that poverty. Among those factors contributing to the feminization of poverty she emphasized the gender bias present in national legislation and in institutional structures, and in the distribution of power and in the decision-making processes. The dominant macroeconomic paradigm, which prioritized growth over equality, rights and sustainable development, could also be held accountable for the situation of many women. She then emphasized that the effects of economic globalization were mainly borne by women.

15. Several global initiatives promoted by the United Nations, had addressed the issue of women and poverty. Among them, Ms. Chung mentioned the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women and the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006). The review of the Decade's implementation by the Commission for Social Development underlined that access for women and youth to financial

resources, through microfinance, had been particularly successful in eradicating poverty. The Secretary-General, in his report on the Decade recognized that gender inequality was a main barrier to progress in reducing poverty and also emphasized that empowered women could be the most effective drivers of development. Ms. Chung also reminded participants of the role played by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in ending poverty and guaranteeing women's rights. Gender equality, had to be recognized as essential to the achievement of all eight Millennium Development Goals and, in particular, in achieving goal 1, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Mutually reinforcing strategies needed to be established to achieve the Goals, especially between goals 1 and 3, to succeed in reducing the feminization of poverty.

16. Ms. Chung highlighted that the realization of women's participation in poverty reduction strategy programmes and public affairs still faced numerous challenges. Poverty reduction strategies had become the main instrument for national development strategies in low-income countries. Regrettably, although the World Bank had affirmed that stakeholder participation was an essential element in each of the stages of the strategies, women's participation remained limited. Ms. Chung reminded participants that the participatory approach to development required the enjoyment of other human rights, such as the right of association and assembly, freedom of expression and the right to information. Participation was also hindered by the violation of human rights, particularly by violence against women. An enabling environment for women's rights was therefore essential to achieve poverty reduction.

17. Next to speak was Ms. Gaim, representing the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), an NGO devoted to improving the lives of Eritrean women through advocacy, training and economic empowerment. She reminded participants that in Africa, and particularly in the sub-Saharan region, poverty was caused by a combination of factors including natural hazards (such as drought) and war, along with illiteracy, poor health facilities, and traditional practices such as female genital mutilation. Its burden was largely borne by women, who suffered increasingly from poverty.

18. She underlined that although the normative framework promoted equality among women and men, their implementation could lack gender sensitivity and as a result produced discrimination. As a result women's vulnerability to poverty was increased, as in the case of limited or no access to land. In Eritrea, attempts were made to assign land to the head of household (which in most cases was a man) regardless of the equality enshrined in the law on property. In this case, NUEW provided training to legal officers to advocate for women's rights to land ownership. Ms. Gaim recalled that the burden of inequality was mainly borne by women and girls who had no access to income-generating activities, education or health. She explained that local projects, implemented by NUEW, could effectively tackle the feminization of poverty and discriminatory gender roles. That project, which targeted women, had successfully increased girls' access to education and promoted income-generating activities. As a consequence, it had improved the overall conditions of women and their families.

19. Ms. Koch, representative of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), focused her presentation on the role of women and the difficult situation they faced especially in mountain and rural areas. Women played a vital role in their family, society and country, but despite this they continued to constitute a marginalized group. Based on the organization's experience, women's empowerment was the precondition for voicing women's concerns.

She also stressed that income-generating activities, network creation, training and education were primary elements to ensure empowerment. Ms. Koch questioned the current legal and policy measures for having not succeeded in reducing the gender poverty gap. She observed that education and training were keys to breaking the cycle of poverty, as well as building political stability and peace. To achieve partnerships with all stakeholders, local ownership was essential. She noted that projects, such as the ACWW project “Send a cow to India and Africa”, targeting rural community women could have a positive impact on poverty reduction and strengthen women skills, increase income and decrease domestic violence. She concluded that poverty was the cause of rural and mountain migration, trafficking of women and children, and the poor living conditions of rural and mountain women.

20. The Chairperson then gave the floor to Ms. Menon-Sen, representing the Jagori organization of India. She underlined that women’s rights were undermined by poverty and that poverty was a denial of human rights. Despite the rhetoric on women rights being the same in all countries, macroeconomic policies and national policies diverged from these rights when implemented. This was the result of macroeconomic policies conceived in isolation from the vulnerable groups. Macroeconomic policies often aimed at attracting direct foreign investment, which often contributed to the isolation of poor urban communities with many consequences for these vulnerable groups, especially those originally from the rural areas. Regrettably, until now activists had not been able to challenge the implementation of these policies. Urban poor, as a result of the beautification, sanitation and cleaning measures that cities undertook, were often moved to slums on the outskirts, where they could not be seen. Urban poor originating from rural areas suffered a double marginalization, for not being urban and for often belonging to a vulnerable group (such as minorities or religious communities). Along with marginalization, a general trend had emerged that criminalized poor people and denied them their basic rights when they lived in the city. She recalled that privatization of social services and basic services in cities also jeopardized the poor in the enjoyment of their basic rights, limiting, for example, their access to water.

21. Based on her organization’s experience, Ms. Menon-Sen questioned the effectiveness of framing the issue in terms of the feminization of poverty, as that contributes to the isolation of women’s issues and confined them to marginal programmes and funds. She urged that deliberations on women and on poverty not be confined to a limited space and directly address the causes of poverty. She also underlined that while States had adopted in their legislation measures for improving the condition of women, their effective implementation was rarely discussed. Ms. Menon-Sen noted that in India women had greatly benefited from the right of access to information, which provides an opportunity for citizens to know what the Government was doing on their behalf. By virtue of being able to access official information, women’s organizations had challenged customary practices and increased transparency.

22. The Chairperson invited Ms. Olmedo Ramos, representing Franciscans International (FI), to make her presentation. Ms. Olmedo Ramos addressed the causes and effects of gender inequality. She pointed out that two of the main causes of inequality were the disparity between the genders and male chauvinism, which resulted in discrimination and the marginalization of women and girls in the family. This was also reflected on school attendance rates. Another source of gender inequality was the exclusion of women from social life. Women did not



participate in the decision-making process and did not apply their rights in the economic, employment, political and cultural areas. In relation to labour rights, women suffered particular discrimination, which translated into wage disparity, sexual harassment and limited access to justice. As a result, women's vulnerability to poverty, injustice and violence increased. Among the factors that increased women's vulnerability, Ms. Olmedo Ramos mentioned the lack of education and health, discrimination, marginalization and oppression. She identified the third cause of gender inequality as women's self-depreciation. As a consequence, families did not enjoy an enabling environment and children lacked the necessary education and follow-up provided by the parents, who had to abandon them in the streets or lock them at home while working, or were themselves forced to work from an early age. FI provided support for a "holistic training", which targeted vulnerable women and girls who had suffered sexual exploitation.

23. The Chairperson highlighted the importance of the previous presentations as they represented the voices of people working in the field with poor women. In stressing the importance of the right of access to information, particularly in connection to the right to participation, he concurred with other speakers.

24. The Chairperson then opened the floor to participants. Several speakers expressed their support for focusing on the root causes of poverty, including culture and tradition. In relation to this, the representative of International Instruments for Indigenous Continental Women of the Americas pointed out that indigenous women often suffered a triple discrimination for being women, poor and indigenous.

25. Mr. Salama raised the challenge of integrating human rights into macroeconomic policies and in the work of actors such as the World Bank and other international financing institutions. Building on this, Ms. Chung underlined that the discussion on the link between international trade law, globalization, neoliberal economic policies, poverty and human rights was still under development. She was supported by Ms. Olmedo Ramos who pointed out that economic provisions contained in international agreements, as the draft agreement of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, could cause more poverty among the poor. Ms. Chung suggested that tools such as the Human Rights Impact Assessment and the Gender Impact Assessment developed by the World Bank could be used to guide development of policy processes, including those in the economic sphere. She added that the United Nations, concerned at the impact of transnational corporations on human rights, had tried to formulate a code of conduct, but the lack of consensus had frozen the process.

26. In response to a question from the representative of the Pan-Pacific and South-East Asian Women Association International, Ms. Koch explained that urban women faced even more hardships and obstacles than rural women, as they had less access to education, health and employment. Natural disaster had a particularly negative impact on mountain and rural poor communities in poor countries. Ms. Menon-Sen concluded by underlining the importance of setting benchmarks for human rights.

### **III. SESSION 2: WOMEN, EMPLOYMENT AND EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATION**

#### **Women and employment**

27. The afternoon's session was moderated by Mr. Sattar and started with a presentation by Ms. Kawar, reflecting on the position of the International Labour Office (ILO) on the empowerment of women, gender equality, and employment. ILO considered employment a key agent in promoting women's empowerment. The core of empowerment lay in women's ability to control their own destiny, and as a consequence women needed to have equal access to rights, resources, capabilities and their application. Ms. Kawar underlined that there were two approaches to employment, one privileging an equity approach (which addressed inequalities and ensured that policies and actions did not exacerbate the situation of women in the labour market) and another promoting an efficiency approach (which addressed the special needs of women to ensure their fulfilment in the work environment). In both approaches women had to be considered as actors and agents, not as recipient's and beneficiaries. At the global level, there were two forces that were currently challenging gender equality in employment: the persisting gender gaps in poverty and employment indicators and the intensification of the global competition, which was creating new employment patterns and conditions. As pointed out by speakers earlier, the ILO representative stressed that the economic growth sought at the national level could create new challenges and fail to reduce poverty. The ILO agenda acknowledged that labour rights were human rights and had to be applied without any distinction between women and men, working in the formal and informal sectors. In summary, in the employment market women particularly suffered from higher unemployment rates, lower wages and segregation (women dominate the informal economy sector).

28. Ms. Kawar remarked that new economic patterns needed to be taken into account: the global economic integration and the care economy. Trade and liberalization had affected women and generally led to a wider gender imbalance. However, trade had also helped women by creating new jobs. On the contrary, liberalization of public services had particularly negatively affected women and economic growth had not always translated into an expansion of the formal economy as a result of the increased labour market flexibility. Additionally, liberalization and globalization also had had a negative impact on women by destroying traditional markets due to the new regulations and constraints. The speaker went on to explain that unpaid work in the care economy represented women's greatest contribution to the economy, while in paid care work conditions remained poor and salaries low. Significantly domestic workers remained vulnerable and frequently worked under forced labour conditions. While this was an expanding area of the world economy, social policies had not followed this trend. Feminization of migration, mainly caused by the care employment created by the Europe's ageing population, had provided at the same time opportunities for empowerment, but also for abuse and discrimination.

29. Ms. Kawar continued her presentation by focusing on best practices on gender equality measures undertaken at the national level. She stressed that there was no one solution applicable to all countries, but many recipes. Improving working conditions in the informal economy involved a holistic approach that concentrated not only on social protection, but also on licensing, regulations, organizations, rehabilitation of child workers, environmental issues, etc. Best practices to combat women's discrimination included the use of affirmative action to ensure women's participation in jobs traditionally dominated by men, lobbying for the inclusion of

domestic work in national legislation, training labour inspectors, and on the employer side, the elaboration of codes of conduct. To achieve an effective and durable change in favour of women, a participatory long-term integrated approach at the local, policy and institutional level was required to ensure the needed changes.

30. Mr. Sattar thanked Ms. Kavar for sharing her valuable ideas, and invited Ms. Genta-Fons from the World Bank to make her presentation.

### **Empowerment of women through participation**

31. Ms. Genta-Fons began by emphasizing that all actors involved in promoting gender equality needed to share information and coordinate their action. The World Bank had incorporated into its mission poverty reduction and the promotion of gender equality and was increasingly mainstreaming gender in its work. The World Bank World Development Report 2006 embraced the notion of equitable development, where people should enjoy equal opportunities not predetermined by race, gender, social, family, country of birth, or circumstances, and where achievements should be based on talents and efforts. Among others, the Report identified the sources of the inequality trap in norms and social structures, that had perpetuated gender differences over centuries, and in different access to information and resources. She underlined that economic, political, legal and social inequalities tended to reproduce themselves over time and across generations, and that gender inequity also had a social cost that was reflected in the gross domestic product.

32. Ms. Genta-Fons, as had other speakers, considered gender equality as a central human right and a core development issue. She also underlined that the World Bank promoted the gender action plan which endorsed the concept of smart economics. Smart economics promoted economic growth through pro-poor economic policies that took into account the gender dimension. The organization, she continued, had also the clear understanding that unless inequalities in the capacities, opportunities, and voices of women and men were reduced, its poverty reduction agenda would not be achieved. In order to foster gender equality concerns and integrate them into the country system strategy and their national policies, the World Bank had developed several tools. The most relevant of these tools was the Country Gender Assessment, which helped in identifying disparities and inequalities in the socio-economic context and in legal and institutional frameworks. To function, the tool needed the benefit of a partnership between States and civil society, and Ms. Genta-Fons recommended that international organizations support these efforts. She also underlined the importance of measuring progress and ranking as a means to encourage States to comply with international women's human rights standards. She ended her presentation by recalling that gender, law and development were deeply related and that equality issues were central to both development and economic approaches.

33. Mr. Sattar invited Ms. Ballantyne, former Secretary-General of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, to begin her presentation. Ms. Ballantyne questioned why, despite the international conventions and declarations on human rights, the social and economic environment for fighting poverty had not been successfully changed and, moreover, why poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor was increasing. She recalled

that the empowerment of men and women, in order to bring about changes in their condition, must be the focus in the fight against poverty. She placed a special emphasis on increasing women's participation to overcome poverty and to address the topic with a comprehensive approach that challenged the socio-economic system. She called upon the advisory bodies to advise the Council to find measures to implement economic, social, and cultural rights. She observed that the human rights, development and peace were strongly linked and recalled that fighting poverty was everybody's responsibility.

34. Ms. Zahidi, representing the World Economic Forum (WEF), addressed the need to create usable and measurable indicators to assess the gender gap. To achieve this, WEF had developed a tool to measure the achievement of gender equality in 58 countries in the following areas: economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, health and well-being and educational attainment.

35. Ms. Zahidi reminded participants that no country had so far achieved complete gender equality. The study contributed to identifying existing strengths and weakness, to create benchmark tools for policymakers and instruments to measure the gender gap, and to foster opportunities to learn from "successful" countries. She then presented the findings of the study in several countries and how they could help in highlighting and targeting the critical areas that needed to be addressed to achieve better gender equality.

36. Mr. Sattar underlined the importance of actively generating ideas to enhance the programmes and policies adopted by the World Bank, and invited the floor to raise questions and comments. Ms. Mbonu, member of the Social Forum, congratulated the panellists for the important issues they had raised. She then underlined the importance of addressing the situation in all countries and continents without any exception. The limited achievements in reducing the gender gap were not due to lack of norms but to the lack of willingness to implement them. Therefore, the importance of sharing the experience and good practices of countries (such as the Nordic countries) that had successfully eliminated or substantially reduced gender inequality and feminization of poverty through governmental policies.

37. Mr. Salama, member of the Social Forum, underlined the importance of sharing tools for assessing the human rights situation in countries and the positive incentive that conditionality of aid subject to human rights can promote. He also underlined the importance of benefiting the international community's willingness to support human rights work and to include in human rights assessments, in addition to national policies and institutional capacity, an assessment of international cooperation. He challenged the concept of poverty as misleading in relation to human rights, as it could be interpreted as a life incident of nobody's fault, as a side effect of economic growth, or as the result of man-made action through policies, lack of democracy and civil and political rights. Human rights can only address the last type of poverty, the man-made one. In the light and in virtue of the international human rights standards, he proposed that States, international financial institutions and international organizations be held accountable to compensate the poor. He then questioned why the Millennium Development Goals had not explicitly mentioned social, economic, and cultural rights. Other speakers joined Mr. Salama, in advocating the inclusion of the cultural element in tools for measuring the gender gap.

38. Mr. Alfredsson, member of the Social Forum, stressed the importance of the Social Forum in issuing recommendations in the framework of existing human rights standards, referring them to existing monitoring institutions and highlighting the gaps. He then asked whether the World Bank Inspection Panel had the jurisdiction to receive complaints on poverty and women, from institutions and NGOs.

39. The representative of Enfants Tiers Monde observed that a global approach was necessary to fight poverty. In a sustainable approach to fighting child poverty, actions had to address the conditions of all the members of the family, and not only women, and their social environment.

40. The representative of the World Bank in Geneva identified governance as an essential element in creating the political willingness in Governments to promote gender equality. He observed that the international community faced the challenge of determining how to ensure that reluctant Governments meet their human rights obligations. He identified two approaches, one bottom-up and the other top-down, that could contribute to creating the political willingness. The bottom-up approach consisted of promoting participation. In the formulation of national poverty reduction strategies the World Bank had been promoting consultative processes that involved women and the poor. He recognized that one of the weaknesses of the poverty reduction strategies processes was requiring that the weakest and poorest bore the burden of knowing and claiming their rights. For this reason, the international community should play an active role in empowering the disenfranchised, NGOs and civil society, with a particular emphasis on countries that have not shown the willingness to achieve gender equality. The top-down approach consisted in the World Bank and other international actors reminding Governments of their international human rights obligations when making decisions on spending priorities. A second way of putting pressure on countries to comply with their obligations, which had had some success, was naming and shaming.

41. The representative of Portugal reminded participants that as economics was a human and social science, it should automatically take into account human rights. She also stressed that women are not only victims, but also active agents in eradicating poverty, and that they had undertaken actions to improve their unequal condition. The discussion of women's human rights in international conferences and NGOs working with women had proven that women were active agents. She recalled that the Convention and its Optional Protocol obliged countries to abide by their obligations and encouraged a more extensive use of the complaint mechanisms. She then stressed that political will was important in fostering change; current phenomena, however, such as transnational corporations holding enormous powers, had to be taken into account.

42. Mr. Sattar pointed out to participants that the frustration of not having fully realized women rights should not cancel recognition of the progress achieved. Additionally, as the representative of the Committee on the Status of Women later noted, if on one hand poverty had increased, on the other hand participation, especially of women, had also increased. In addition, the Millennium Development Goals Report 2005 had demonstrated that significant progress had been made in alleviating poverty. He also reminded participants that international financial institutions did not have the capability of influencing all countries to include gender issues in their agendas, but they certainly do in those negotiating loans and grants. He then called for a more comprehensive measuring of countries' gender-related indices, while taking into account the progress of all social indices and including the measurements undertaken by NGOs.

43. The representative of the Pax Romana questioned the WEF study for lack of historical sensitivity, for being constructed under a neoliberal capital ideology, and for the organization's denial of access to its meetings. He then warned against discrepancies between democracy index rankings and human rights rankings, which could result in very different positioning of countries. As did a number of other speakers, he urged the use of the term "eradicating poverty" as opposed to "reducing" it, which did not imply the complete end of poverty. He suggested that women's self-determination was a prerequisite for all other rights and the empowerment of women.

44. ATD Fourth world representative noted that poor people and women could lose hope as a consequence of their despair. She called upon the World Bank, if it had not yet done so, to reflect on how to reach the poorest of the poor to ensure that they were not left behind in the World Bank's programmes targeting the poor. Krishna Patel, representing the Committee on the Status of Women, asked how the two concepts of women and gender were handled within the United Nations.

45. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments. Ms. Zahidi, answering the questions raised on the WEF report, acknowledged the need to include as many countries as possible in the study and ensure that the next report increased the number of monitored countries, with a special emphasis on African, Middle Eastern and Asian countries. She also recalled that the report combated stereotypes, as could be demonstrated through the analysis of the rankings of the countries.

46. The great challenge was not producing studies on gender equality, noted Ms. Genta-Fons, but how to implement measures. To achieve results in development, a broad partnership between civil society, NGOs, Governments and the private sector was needed. Leadership was essential to achieving this objective, but it had to be linked to accountability. Political participation and voting were also elements that ensured advancement. She then stressed that there was no one formula to achieve development and no development organization owned such a formula. It was a work in progress that must benefit from the partnership of all actors.

47. From an ILO perspective, Ms. Kavar clarified that social, economic and employment policies were usually separated, with the latter being residual. Short-term pressures on Governments limited the impact of international organization's in the long-term goal of reducing poverty. She emphasized that political willingness was not enough, as Governments also needed to have some knowledge of the complexity of the issues and to possess technical and economical resources. Establishing institutional mechanisms that ensured gender equality was a precondition to its achievement. Ms. Ballantyne highlighted her desire to see the United Nations reach the target of 50 per cent women's participation, as opposed to the current 30 per cent.

48. Mr. Sattar closed the session by thanking the panellists and participants for their interesting contributions.

#### **IV. SESSION 3: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **A. Conclusions**

49. The following conclusions were based on presentations by panellists and on the comments raised by the members of the Social Forum and its participants.

## **Feminization of poverty**

50. The Social Forum was aware of the increasing feminization of poverty and the fact that women were the main actors in organizations combating poverty and social exclusion. Poverty eradication and the elimination of extreme poverty remained an ethical and moral imperative of humankind, based on respect for human dignity.

51. The Social Forum recalled that all human beings, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, must enjoy the fundamental human rights, which were universal, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Poverty was a human rights violation and was connected to the violation of other human rights, such as the rights to education, health, access to justice, shelter and employment. Poverty was also the source of inequality, discrimination, and exclusion. Norms and social structures, as well as culture and traditional practices, could perpetuate or contribute to ending inequality, discrimination, and exclusion.

52. Gender equality in the private, social, political and international sphere was necessary to eradicate the feminization of poverty. The Social Forum recognized that domestic violence and trafficking of girls and women were among the phenomena that most impede the achievement of equality.

53. Women suffered a higher degree of vulnerability than men due to the lack of access to assets and opportunities, especially in rural and mountain areas. Additionally, the impact of poverty and natural disasters in rural and mountain areas needed to be further studied.

54. The Social Forum was of the view that addressing the root causes of the feminization of poverty and the growing gap between the rich and the poor were prerequisites to eradicating poverty. Similarly, the Social Forum recalled that possessing indicators to measure the achievement of international human rights standards concerning women and the gender gap were necessary to understand and fight the feminization of poverty.

55. The effects of globalization, liberalization and international trade law could have negative consequences for women and make them even more vulnerable to poverty and extreme poverty. Additionally, social policies and certain economic policies implemented at the national level without gender sensitivity could also negatively impact the livelihoods of women.

56. The lack of an effective national policy to implement available international instruments (such as the Convention and its Optional Protocol, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, etc.) and the lack of mechanisms to claim women's rights at the national level were negatively affecting the fulfilment of women's rights.

57. The Social Forum recalled that only a global partnership between States, international organizations, NGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector is likely to eradicate poverty. The Social Forum acknowledged the crucial role played by civil society in fighting poverty and gender inequality and, in particular, in advocating for new legislation and ensuring its implication.

## **Women and employment**

58. Women suffer higher unemployment rates and lower wages and still dominate the informal economy sector. Unpaid work was also still performed mainly by women and is rarely recognized in social legislation.

59. The Social Forum noted that women's empowerment was crucial to eradicate poverty and that employment promoted empowerment. Micro-credit initiatives, among others, had successfully increased women's employment, with a consequent improvement in the living conditions of women and their families.

60. The Social Forum underlined that indicators measuring the gender gap in employment and benchmark tools were necessary to assess the progress towards gender equality.

61. Education and training were crucial to expand women's opportunities to participate in the economy and in promoting their social inclusion.

## **Empowerment of women through participation**

62. The participation of women in economic, social and political life is still limited. Women rarely actively participate in decision-making processes (which, among others, include policies and budgets) or in the elaboration of social and macroeconomic policies, and the number of women running for office and being elected is still too low.

63. The Social Forum noted that empowered women had proved to be dynamic actors in promoting development and eradicating poverty.

64. Access to information is a precondition to increasing women's participation.

## **B. Recommendations**

65. The following recommendations were made by the Chairperson on behalf of the Social Forum.

## **Feminization of poverty**

66. The Social Forum urged all international, national and local actors committed to fighting poverty to focus on eliminating the root causes of poverty and the feminization of poverty. States, international organizations, NGOs, donors, the private sector and civil society needed to advocate and build a strong partnership to eradicate poverty. States and international development actors should also share best practices and lessons learned in fighting poverty, the feminization of poverty and promoting gender equality.

67. The Social Forum recommended that States increase women's access to information. States should also establish institutional mechanisms and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that gender equality was respected.



68. States that have not ratified the Committee on the Elimination of discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol were urged to do so. The Social Forum also recommended that States take substantive measures to promote and ensure women's rights. At the national level, States should elaborate gender-sensitive policies, address the special needs of women living in poverty, mitigate the negative effects of their macroeconomic policies on the condition of women and revise their legislation to ensure that it promoted gender equality. States that had ratified the Optional Protocol should disseminate information on the use of its complaint mechanisms.

69. Indicators that measure the achievement of gender equality should be developed or updated. States are required to collect gender-sensitive data and develop methodologies for incorporating gender analysis into policy-making. The Social Forum also welcomed the development of gender equality benchmark tools for policymakers, done in conjunction with international development actors and national actors.

70. The Social Forum welcomed the proposal to promote gender mainstreaming in international organizations and especially in their programmes and projects. United Nations agencies and the international financial institutions were invited to provide support to Governments in achieving gender equality in their overall economic growth and development programmes. Loans for trade reforms sensitive to gender should be increased.

71. The Social Forum was of the view that increasing efforts to promote and protect the rights of rural, mountain and farming women would contribute to halting rural migration. The Social Forum recommended that the impact of natural disasters on the feminization of poverty, especially in rural and mountain areas be studied.

72. Free legal assistance should be provided to poor women. Additionally, measures that fight violence against women, particularly domestic violence, and trafficking of women and girls should be adopted by States.

### **Women and employment**

73. The Social Forum urged States to develop and ensure the effective implementation of laws and policies that promote gender equality in employment. In particular, legislation should promote equal opportunities for women, take into account the special needs of women in all spheres of employment, and eliminate discriminatory practices by employers such as wage disparities.

74. Social and family policies should enhance the participation of women in the labour market through ensuring parental leave, child care support and flexibility in the workplace.

75. Legislation should also recognize the right to organize of workers, especially women workers in the informal economy, unpaid work, and the special needs of working women.

76. ILO Conventions relevant to the informal economy should be ratified by States.

77. The Social Forum also highlighted the linkage between extreme poverty and corruption, and requested more commitment from States towards the total eradication of corruption.

78. The Social Forum recommended the generation of more disaggregated data concerning employment indicators, both at the national and international levels.

### **Empowerment of women through participation**

79. The Social Forum called upon States to remove the deeply rooted structural barriers and human rights violations against women that impede the effective participation of women and their empowerment. In particular, measures should target women's participation in private, social, and public life.

80. Women's participation in decision-making processes, in the development of legislation, in the elaboration and implementation of macroeconomic policy and in the poverty reduction strategies, needed to be increased. To achieve this, women needed to be empowered and be able to fully implement the right to access information.

81. The Social Forum called upon States and international actors, such as donor Governments and the international financial institutions, to design poverty reduction strategies that ensure participation by the most vulnerable, particularly women. Poverty reduction strategies had to support the ability of human rights duty bearers to discharge their obligations and the ability of right holders to claim their rights.

82. Education and training of women must be increased to achieve higher levels of participation and fight against women's discrimination and exclusion.

## **Part Two: Guiding principles**

### **V. SESSION 4: DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES “EXTREME POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: THE RIGHT OF THE POOR”**

83. The Chairperson explained that the origin of the document “Implementation of existing human rights norms and standards in the context of the fight against extreme poverty” (A/HRC/Sub.1/58/16, sec. I) lay in the request of the Commission on Human Rights to the Sub-Commission to create an ad hoc expert group to examine the relevance of preparing guiding principles on the implementation of existing human rights norms and standards in the context of the fight against extreme poverty. The expert group conducted a broad consultation process which, among others, included poor persons, grass-roots NGOs and universities. During the consultations, the experts were encouraged by the poor to urge the United Nations to adopt a binding document that would contain their rights.

84. The Chairperson invited Mr. Yokota, member of the Sub-Commission and of the ad hoc expert group, to introduce the draft guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights: the rights of the poor. Mr. Yokota thanked all persons, organizations, institutions and the poor for their encouragement and contribution in support of the expert group in carrying out its task and Mr. Bengoa for the leadership he had provided to the ad hoc expert group. Mr. Yokota went on

to present the four assumptions of the document. First, the ad hoc expert group decided to apply a rights-based approach to poverty and extreme poverty, which implied that the duty bearers needed to take immediate measures to ensure that all people enjoyed human rights. Secondly, the expert group applied a holistic approach to human rights, recalling their universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness, and consequent reflection in the lives of persons living in poverty and extreme poverty. Thirdly, the expert group felt that the poor should own the processes and participate freely in formulating and implementing solutions in the fight against poverty. Lastly, the importance of adopting measures and mechanisms to ensure that rights are enforced was stressed.

85. The guiding principles conceptualise extreme poverty as a human condition and identify participation of the poor in the formulation and implementation of all governmental programmes and policies as a key element in fighting extreme poverty. The discrimination and stigmatization suffered by the poor are considered human rights violations to be criticized and combated by States, international agencies and other concerned parties. Reiterating within the guiding principles the reaffirmation of the universality, invisibility and interdependence of all human right, the speaker noted as a result, the list of rights of the poor (which includes civil and political rights, the rights to food and health, potable water, housing, education and culture, and employment and the right to justice) should not be regarded as exhaustive, but only as aiming at setting minimum standards. The third section of the document addresses the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of States and of the international cooperation actors. Additionally, it also provides some principles for public and private entities in combating poverty.

86. The Chairperson invited Mr. Viard, Executive Director of ATD-Fourth World, to provide his input on the draft guiding principles. Mr. Viard welcomed the draft guiding principles for the support they would provide to the dispossessed in accessing human rights and fighting familiarization to poverty. He appreciated the multidimensional approach of the guiding principle, which focuses on people living in persistent poverty both in developing and developed countries. The speaker agreed with the guiding principles that discrimination and stigmatization needed to be eliminated and that participation of the poor was the sine qua non for fighting poverty, and that the absence of participation increased inequality and needed to be taken into account when implementing development projects. He described the consultation process in the elaboration of the principles that had taken place. He recalled that in order to better understand of poverty and establish a dialogue with the poor, a continuous evaluation of public policies and their impact on the poor and support to those who were fighting against poverty were necessary. He concluded by requesting that the expert group reflect on how to apply the guiding principles at the local level, and by urging the Human Rights Council to adopt them.

87. The Chairperson then gave the floor to Mr. Prove, representing the Lutheran World Federation, a membership network of churches implement projects in poor communities. Mr. Prove praised the Social Forum's initiative to give substance to the concept of indivisibility of human rights through the elaboration of the draft guiding principles. Echoing Mr. Viard, he emphasized the value of promoting a participatory approach to fighting poverty and recalled that the poor were in the best position to understand their problems and produce the most viable solutions. Exclusion, he observed, described the essence and core of extreme poverty: exclusion from capacities, responsibilities, entitlements and rights, as opposed to focus on issues of economic disadvantage. He agreed with the guiding principles' methodological choice of

applying a rights-based approach, which preached the fulfilment of all human rights, as this implied the eradication of extreme poverty. Extremely poverty was a legacy of the cast system and poverty was the basis of exclusion. He also raised several comments and questions on the guiding principles, which are reported in the following paragraphs.

88. The Chairperson reminded participants that the guiding principles are still under revision, and invited the participants and the members of the Forum to share their comments on the document. The representatives of Portugal and Chile, the Representative of the Women's International League to the United Nations for Peace and Freedom and the delegate from Pax Romana welcomed the guiding principles and underlined their value and importance for the most vulnerable and poor people as well as their possible contribution to advancing human rights and poverty issues in the Sub-Commission and the Human Rights Council. The document's strengths were identified in the emphasis it put on participation, on the multidimensional characteristics of poverty, and on a universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated approach to human rights. The areas identified for improving the draft raised by the speakers and the floor could be grouped into strategic and substantive clusters of issues. Among the strategic issues, speakers encouraged the Social Forum to think of how to guide the principles, once finalized, through potentially difficult political discussions. The question was also raised as to what kinds of monitoring and follow-up mechanisms could be envisaged. However, speakers cautioned against the proliferation of monitoring systems, and encouraged a more central role for existing monitoring mechanisms, referring in particular to the human rights treaty bodies.

89. On the substantive side, while not objecting to the need to critically evaluate the responsiveness of existing international human rights legal standards to the situation of those living in extreme poverty, speakers expressed the need to ensure consistency with that body of law. Areas where greater harmonization could be pursued included: the non-discrimination principle under treaty law, the extent of duties regarding international cooperation; the content of various socio-economic rights such as the rights to water, health, employment and maternal and reproductive health; the extent to which obligations are attached to private actors; the content of property rights as stated in international conventions; and international standards concerning access to justice. The speakers emphasized to the ad hoc of the expert group that criminalization of breaches of law concerning poverty issues should be consistent with international standards. Other questions and comments regarded States obligations, the need for more focus on the issue of women's vulnerability, and the importance on underlining the right to information. The representative of ATD-Fourth World suggested inserting the concept of decent work into the right of employment, and asserted that the notion of social security was a human right. Ms. Chung argued that the guiding principles needed to take into account the impact of international agreements, such as the Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreements on poor people in the least developed countries. Mr. Alfredsson suggested that policy recommendations in the document should be included in the future Human Rights Council resolution adopting the guiding principles. Another issue discussed by participants was the opportunity to further highlight in the document the condition and role of women in suffering and fighting poverty. Some participants also expressed the view that poverty was by definition a violation of human rights, and that therefore the guiding principles found their justification in the Charter of the United Nations.

**Part Three: Vision and recommendations for future  
expert advice to the Human Rights Council**

**VI. SESSION 5: “VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
EXPERT ADVICE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL:  
THE FUTURE OF THE SOCIAL FORUM”**

90. At the beginning of the afternoon sessions the remaining comments from the floor on the morning session were addressed.

91. The afternoon session focused on Human Rights Council decision 2006/102, which requested the Sub-Commission, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, to elaborate a report containing its visions and recommendations for future expert advice to the Council. The Secretariat proposal to structure the afternoon session around a discussion of the purpose, methods and procedures, and content and substantive focus of the Social Forum was accepted by consensus. To facilitate the review of the Forum’s past activities, participants received a conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat containing a “Compilation of information - previous Social Forum sessions” (see annex III).

92. During the discussions, a strong consensus emerged among Forum members, representatives of States, and civil society participants, concerning their vision for the future of the Social Forum, and all highly recommended that the Human Rights Council preserve the mandate and functions of the Social Forum. All endorsed the view that the Social Forum was a unique mechanism that discharged a special and indispensable role in the United Nations human rights system and, therefore, merited continuation. It was recognized that the main added value of the Social Forum to the system was the provision of an opportunity for direct dialogue with the poor and most vulnerable people. Furthermore, it was recognized that, as stated in Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights resolution 2005/8, the current reform of the United Nations should take into account the contribution of the Social Forum as a forum for dialogue that could be found nowhere else in the United Nations human rights system. Mr. Sattar presented a detailed proposal on the purpose, content and substantive focus, and methods and procedures of the Social Forum which, along with the comments expressed by other members and participants, is summarized in the following paragraphs.

**A. Conclusions and recommendations**

93. The Social Forum adopted the following conclusions and recommendations in response to Human Rights Council decision 2006/102, which requested the Social Forum to contribute to the report of the Sub-Commission containing its visions and recommendations for future expert advice to the Council.

**Purpose**

94. Participants agreed that the Social Forum was different from other human rights bodies in that it ensured that the most vulnerable, who generally had limited or no access to international bodies, were able to share and exchange their opinions and experiences concerning human rights. The United Nations and specialized and affiliated agencies were in a position to benefit from the dialogue as they were able to directly interact with the most vulnerable and incorporated their

concerns, perspectives and ideas into the Forum's work. Speakers pointed out that the openness to broad participation, particularly of NGOs working in the field and people affected by poverty, which characterized the Social Forum was what distinguished it from the other existing United Nations mechanisms and bodies that also dealt with poverty.

95. Participants shared the view that the momentum created by the Forum by bringing various actors together greatly contributed to the promotion and protection of human rights. The Social Forum, with its mandate to focus on the problems of the most vulnerable and especially the victims of extreme poverty and the violation of women's rights, at its past sessions addressed themes that were rarely tackled by other mechanisms, such as its focus during the present session on poor rural women. This also provided the opportunity for the Social Forum to elaborate in-depth studies. The Forum's documentation had been used as a reference in numerous other studies.

96. Participants and the members of the Social Forum agreed that the Social Forum was an essential actor in ensuring the universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights, effectively maintaining an equal focus and emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights.

97. Participants and the members of the Social Forum expressed a range of views regarding the optimal name for the Social Forum, noting the need not to duplicate the name of existing bodies. The members of the Social Forum suggested that the name be maintained as the Social Forum had acquired respect in the human rights arena.

### **Content and substantive focus**

98. It was also widely agreed that the Social Forum should continue to focus on the most vulnerable and on providing them with a space for interactive dialogue and act as a source of ideas on issues of poverty for the entire human rights system through exposing their activities to the views of the Civil Society. The Social Forum and expert members of the Social Forum pointed out that it was the only forum within the United Nations system devoted to the question of poverty from a human rights perspective and should not be an isolated event but a process that benefits the whole human rights system. It was proposed that when setting the agenda, the Social Forum should seek, well in advance, the input of relevant United Nations actors, such as special procedures and NGOs working in the field. Linking the agenda to other activities carried out within the United Nations human rights system would be also crucial for ensuring follow-up to its recommendations.

99. Accordingly, the Social Forum should focus on:

1. Questions related to eradication of poverty in the context of human rights;
2. Capturing the best practices in fighting against poverty in the light of grass-roots presentations to the Social Forum;
3. Sharing and discussing the relevant guidelines and reports prepared by the Sub-Commission (or its successor) or other human rights bodies, as case may be, with the civil society.

## Methods and procedures

100. The members of the Social Forum recommended maintaining the current number of experts and opposed a reduction to five experts, as in the other working groups. This was to preserve its diversity of views and approaches. A suggestion was made to expand the membership of the Forum to include ad hoc members, the special procedures and all relevant mechanisms, with the aim of bridging the gaps in the human rights system.

101. The Social Forum had served the useful and unique purpose of bringing original perspectives on the problems of the most vulnerable people to the notice of human rights forums. Unfortunately, the two days allocated for it had proved insufficient. It was unanimously recommended that the duration of the Social Forum should be extended to five days, as was the practice with certain working groups of the Sub-Commission, with the aim of achieving the objectives outlined in paragraphs 98 and 99 above, in the following format:

1. Two days of thematic discussions, in line with the present format of the Social Forum, on questions of poverty and human rights as decided by the successor of the Sub-Commission or the relevant body;
2. Two days of discussions on the work of the international human rights mechanisms in the field of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Right to Development in relation to poverty, to provide comments and feed back from the civil society to different mechanisms (e.g., working groups, special rapporteurs, etc.);
3. One day dedicated to interactive debate with mandate holders on issues related to the topic of the Social Forum, and to formulating conclusions and recommendations to be presented to relevant bodies.

102. The members of the Social Forum recommended that more resources be made available to facilitate participation of representative individuals from amongst the most vulnerable people.

103. The need to promptly establish a mechanism for the election of the members of the Social Forum was also widely acknowledged, as it was observed that members should continue to be drawn from the experts of the successor body to the Sub-Commission.

104. Comments were made on whether the Social Forum should fall directly under the Human Rights Council or be integrated it into its new subsidiary body. Some members of the Forum raised the possibility of transforming the Social Forum into a permanent working group of the Human Rights Council or of the successor to the Sub-Commission. However, due to the ongoing reform process, there was a general feeling that it would be inappropriate at this stage to discuss in detail the position of the Social Forum within the human rights system.

105. The Social Forum requested that the participation of relevant special rapporteurs be linked with work on issues of poverty in order to strengthen the follow-up to its session and have an impact on the human rights agenda. It was largely agreed that the follow-up should not necessarily be done directly by the Social Forum.

106. The Chairperson informed the participants that the recommendations of the Social Forum would be submitted to the Sub-Commission for consideration.

**Annex I**

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

Provisional agenda	A/HRC/Sub.1/58/SF/1
Background note prepared by the Secretariat	A/HRC/Sub.1/58/SF/2
Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights resolution	2005/8
Working paper submitted by Chin-sung Chung	A/HRC/Sub.1/58/SF.3
Final report of ad hoc expert group on the need to develop guiding principles on the implementation of existing human rights norms and standards in the context of the fight against extreme poverty	A/HRC/Sub.1/58/16
Human Rights Council decision 2006/102	2006/102
Report of the third Social Forum	E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/21



**Annex II**

**PROGRAMME OF THE SOCIAL FORUM**



**Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**

**SOCIAL FORUM 2006**

**The fight against poverty and the right to participation: the role of women**

**3 and 4 August 2006 Conference Room XXVI,  
Palais des Nations, Geneva**

## **PROGRAMME**

**Thursday, 3 August**

10 a.m. - 10.30 a.m. **OPENING OF THE SOCIAL FORUM**

by the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
Mehr Khan Williams

### **SELECTION OF THE CHAIR**

10.30 a.m. - 1 p.m. **SESSION 1**

#### **PANEL: THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY: CAUSES, EFFECTS AND SOLUTIONS**

Panellists:

Chin-sung Chung, Expert, member of the Social Forum  
Tsega Gaim, Department Head, National Union of Eritrean Women, Eritrea  
Joanna Koch, Representative to the United Nations, Associated Country Women  
of the World  
Kalyani Menon-Sen, Coordinator, Jagori, India  
Ana Maria Olmedo Ramos, Franciscans International, Guatemala

Moderator:

José Bengoa, Expert, member of the Social Forum

### **GENERAL DEBATE**

3 p.m. - 5 p.m. **SESSION 2**

#### **PANEL: WOMEN, EMPLOYMENT, AND EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATION**

Panellists:

Edith Ballantyne, former Secretary-General, Women's International League for  
Peace and Freedom  
Teresa Genta-Fons, Lead Counsel, Legal Vice Presidency, the World Bank  
Mary Kavar, Senior Technical Expert on Gender and Employment,  
International Labour Office  
Saadia Zahidi, Head, Women Leaders Programme, World Economic Forum

Moderator:

Abdul Sattar, Expert, member of the Social Forum

**GENERAL DEBATE**

5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

**SESSION 3**

**PLENARY DISCUSSION: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Friday 4 August**

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**SESSION 4**

**PANEL: DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES “EXTREME POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: THE RIGHTS OF THE POOR” PREPARED BY THE AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON THE NEED TO DEVELOP GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING HUMAN RIGHTS NORMS AND STANDARDS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FIGHT AGAINST EXTREME POVERTY**

Members of the ad hoc expert group:

Yozo Yokota, Expert, member of the Sub-Commission

Commentators:

Thierry Viard, Executive Director, ATD Fourth World

Peter Prove, Office for International Affairs and Human Rights, Lutheran World Federation

Moderator:

José Bengoa, Expert, member of the Social Forum

**GENERAL DEBATE**

3 p.m. - 5 p.m.

**SESSION 5**

**PLENARY: VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPERT ADVICE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: THE FUTURE OF THE SOCIAL FORUM**

Moderator:

José Bengoa, Expert, Member of the Social Forum

**PLENARY DISCUSSION**

5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

**CLOSURE OF THE SESSION**

**CHAIRPERSON’S CLOSING REMARKS**

### Annex III

#### COMPILATION OF INFORMATION - PREVIOUS SOCIAL FORUM SESSIONS

SF	Resolution/ decision	SF members present	Panels	Working papers and reports	Main issues discussed	Main recommendations	Follow-up
3 <sup>rd</sup> Session (21-22 July 2005) - “Poverty and Economic Growth challenges to human rights”	2004/8 <sup>a</sup> 2003/264 <sup>b</sup> 2004/217 <sup>c</sup>	Bengoa Chung Mbonu Motoc O'Connor Bossuyt Sattar	Panel 1: “The perspective of those living in poverty: Voices from around the world”; Panel 2: “Growth with accountability”; Panel 3: “Methods and instruments of accountability”.	WP submitted by José Bengoa (E/CN.4/Sub.2/SF/2005/3) Report of the Chairman-Rapporteur José Bengoa (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/21)	Principle of accountability - its role and implications - in the relationship between economic growth, poverty and human rights. - The meaningful participation of people in decisions affecting them and their empowerment.	- To consider means of enhancing active, full and meaningful participation of the poor in the process of formulating policies and strategies to attain the Millennium Development Goals.	General Assembly resolution 60/157 of 23 February 2006
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session (22-23 July 2004) - “Poverty, Rural Poverty and Human Rights”	2002/12 <sup>a</sup> 2003/107 <sup>b</sup> 2003/164 <sup>c</sup>	Alfredsson Bengoa Bíró Chen Kartashkin Mbonu Sattar	Panel 1: “Poverty and human rights: empowerment of people living in poverty”; Panel 2: “Rural poverty and extreme poverty; special groups”; Panel 3: “The role of human rights in the development of operational strategies to address poverty”; Panel 4: “Recommendations on elements for incorporating human rights into poverty reduction strategies”.	WP submitted by José Bengoa (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/44) Report of the Chairman-Rapporteur José Bengoa (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/26)	- The relationship between rural poverty and the rights of peasants and other rural communities. - Human rights in operational strategies to address poverty: discussion on governance mechanisms. - The challenge of extreme poverty in today’s world.	- Poverty and extreme poverty must be addressed from a human rights perspective. - A renewed debate on the ways and means of making existing instruments on the rights of rural people more effective, in particular women, under international law.	General Assembly resolution 59/185 of 8 March 2005

SF	Resolution/ decision	SF members present	Panels	Working papers and reports	Main issues discussed	Main recommendations	Follow-up
1 <sup>st</sup> Session (2 August 2002): “The relationship between poverty and the right to food”	2001/24 <sup>1</sup> 2002/106 <sup>2</sup>	Bayour Bengoa Decaux Eide Kartashkin O’Connor Ogurtsov Sattar Warzazi Zerrougui	Panel A: “Globalization and Human Rights: challenges and opportunities in the new millennium”; Panel B: “The realities of hunger and PRS: experiences, views and visions”; Panel C: “Rural poverty reduction strategies and the right to food: what have we learned?”	Report of the Chairman-Rapporteur José Bengoa (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2002/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interrelationship between hunger and poverty.</li> <li>- Strategies that poverty needs to empower the poor for the realization of their rights, including the right to food.</li> <li>- The economic, political, social and cultural dimensions of the right to food.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of a national strategy on the right to adequate food, taking into consideration also the realization of other rights (education, health, etc.).</li> <li>- Urgent need for more stakeholder participation (representatives of the poor and civil society organizations, in the decision-making process of national PRS.</li> </ul>	

Abbreviations: SF, Social Forum; WP, working paper.

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<sup>a</sup> Resolution of the Sub-Commission.

<sup>b</sup> Resolution of the Commission on Human Rights.

<sup>c</sup> Decision of the Economic and Social Council.

**Annex IV**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

**THE SOCIAL FORUM  
3 and 4 August 2006  
Geneva**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

**Members of the Human Rights Council**

ALGERIA  
ARGENTINA  
BAHRAIN  
BANGLADESH  
ECUADOR  
FINLAND  
FRANCE  
GERMANY  
JAPAN  
JORDAN  
SRI LANKA  
TUNISIA  
ZAMBIA

**States Members of the United Nations represented by observers**

ANDORRA  
BELGIUM  
BHUTAN  
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA  
BOTSWANA  
BURUNDI  
CHILE  
CONGO  
CÔTE D'IVOIRE  
EL SALVADOR  
ERITREA

ESTONIA

GUINEA

KAZAKHSTAN

LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

NEPAL

PORTUGAL

SPAIN

TIMOR-LESTE

TOGO

TURKEY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Non-member State represented by observers**

HOLY SEE

**Other observer**

PALESTINE

**United Nations**

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

**United Nations specialized agencies**

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE (ILO)

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION  
(UNESCO)

WORLD BANK

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)

**Intergovernmental organizations**

AFRICAN UNION

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

**Non-governmental organizations**

**General consultative status**

ATD FOURTH WORLD

CONFERENCE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CONSULTATIVE  
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

EUROPE - THIRD WORLD CENTRE

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL

NEW HUMANITY

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

WORLD MUSLIM CONGRESS

WORLD ORGANISATION AGAINST TORTURE (OMCT)

ZONTA INTERNATIONAL

**Special consultative status**

ACTION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA PAIX ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT DANS  
LA REGION DES GRANDS LACS

AFRICAN COMMISSION OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTERS

ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

ARIGATO FOUNDATION



ASIAN INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES NETWORK

ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD

COALITION AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

FEMMES AFRICA SOLIDARITE

INTER-AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR THE RIGHTS AND LIBERATION OF PEOPLES

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREEDOM OF  
EDUCATION (OIDEL)

PAN PACIFIC AND SOUTH EAST ASIA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

PAX ROMANA

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WORLD ALLIANCE OF YMCAS

WORLD UNION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

WORLDWIDE ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

**Roster status**

COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ORGANIZATION OF PEACE

FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RURAL ADULT CATHOLIC MOVEMENTS  
(FIMARC)

**Other NGOs**

EUROPE UNIE

JAGORI

NATIONAL UNION OF ERITREAN WOMEN

SWISS CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES

WESEF

**Academics and others**

CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIÓN EN MIGRACIONES

COLLEGE UNIVERSITAIRE HENRY DUNANT

HAWAI'I INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

UNIVERSITY OF BERN

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

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