



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and  
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:  
priority theme: promoting empowerment of people in achieving  
poverty eradication, social integration and full employment  
and decent work for all**

### **Statement submitted by *Fraternité Notre Dame*, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

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



## Statement

Fraternité Notre Dame, founded by Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik, works to relieve poverty around the world.

In this pessimistic world, so enslaved to selfishness and money, we wish to testify that uniting goodwill among non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can tackle the misery inherent in poverty conditions. Selfless charity still exists and can be set as an ideal for an entire lifetime. Thank God.

For 19 years, Fraternité Notre Dame has been actively working in Haiti, serving the most destitute in a mountainous area, cut off from the rest, less favoured in various fields, including children's education, health and development.

In 2011 in Haiti, the World Food Programme financed one of our large projects in infrastructure, building a road segment to open up sections of the local population. The project provided a job to 800 people for months, each receiving wages and food support. In addition to this, the United Nations Children's Fund in 2012, right after the earthquake that rocked the island, allowed us to build a school for over 500 pupils.

Collaboration between various NGOs also enabled us to provide shelter to hundreds of poor families, through wood-and-block structures.

Other people of goodwill are bringing in potable water and medicine. Hairdressers, medical doctors or dentists are offering their services to benefit the children; army mechanics are fixing free of charge the vehicles needed to transport the sick and injured through the mountains. Physicians and nurses provide free care at Fraternité Notre Dame's dispensary.

In the Niger, within the framework of supporting childhood, Fraternité Notre Dame welcomes orphans or children in precarious family situations, minors or children from single mothers or those with mental deficiencies. The literacy rate in the Niger is only 28.7 per cent.

Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik, has always insisted on the importance of educating little girls. Since 2002, Fraternité Notre Dame has been managing a kindergarten, along with a primary and secondary school, which welcomes over 700 children, among them many are orphaned or from needy families.

Most of these children in need have obtained excellent results at their school exams towards graduation.

Thanks to a positive pooling of goodwill, we are in a position to assist 135 families with food. Set up in a popular area of Niamey, our clinic offers care for all: consultations in general medicine, gynaecology and paediatrics, along with immunization programmes and minor surgery. Such infrastructures have created some jobs for the locals.

Not long ago, a facility dedicated to maternity was developed, which allows for follow-up and advocacy for household mothers who experience precarious family situations. There is also an opening to sensitize them to the necessity of emphasizing schooling for girls in particular, as they are more neglected than boys. Without instruction, there is no hope for social integration: Fraternité Notre Dame is committed in the field to promoting that cause.

Upon request from the judicial authorities in the Niger, Fraternité Notre Dame also offers temporary assistance to children in social difficulty, such as those who have escaped from domestic violence, or been victimized by human trafficking or ill-treatment.

The groups that are part of the Coalition of Niger NGOs for the Rights of Children, of which Fraternité Notre Dame is a founding member, work together with a common aim to make the rights and duties of children known, towards improving their condition by opposing trafficking and forced labour and lobbying with national or international entities, along with regional and local communities and religious leaders, for a better implementation of the rights of children.

In Europe, volunteering and goodwill initiatives are not encouraged. As a tragic result, the following fact was observed in France: poverty among those aged 18-24 has increased by 4 per cent in urban areas.

Volunteering is indispensable in any society and should be acknowledged by all. Fuelling hatred between minorities, imposing a sectarian model under the pretext of supreme secularism, has never contributed any good to the social and economic welfare of civilization in general, nor society in particular.

More than ever, we need respect for all and tolerance for all, with no distinction between race, class, gender or creed.

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