



# 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: Inclusive and resilient recovery from  
COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity  
for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and  
dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

### **Statement submitted by the Transdiaspora Network, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The UN established among its purposes that by 2030, universal access to health coverage would be achieved. For all this, the support from organizations and institutions for research, development and manufacture of vaccines and drugs for COVID-19 is essential, but also for all the diseases that affect poorer countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge to government, administrative, health, educational and social service institutions at all levels. The initial ignorance of the behaviour of the virus in epidemiological terms has forced to seek innovative solutions. The fact is that COVID has not only revolutionized life in all parts of the planet but has also changed the health and educational system around the world, both in the organization as in the learning needs and the methodology used.

The difficulty in slowing the initial expansion of the COVID-19 epidemic forced governments to apply extraordinary measures, such as closing public buildings and limiting mobility. As a consequence, production, consumption and tourism have been reduced in most countries, causing great economic consequences.

The effects are being particularly profound in the countries most affected by the pandemic and in those that depend heavily on international trade, tourism and exports of raw materials, energy products and basic products, especially the most vulnerable countries, those whose dependence of these activities is very important.

One of the most important challenges that society has to face is guaranteeing universal access to health. It must promote and guarantee effective, universal and free access of the population to health services, social assistance and medicines, in a medical quality system and with non-discriminatory treatment. Progress must be made in the improvements that are needed in the long term and that all countries are firmly committed to strengthening the global health architecture.

Spending on health services was already low globally as a result of the austerity measures implemented by many countries in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008. Developed countries have been able to substantially increase budgetary allocations for health in response to the pandemic. In developing countries, which face a greater burden of illness generally, the pandemic is reducing the already scarce availability of essential health-care services, goods and supplies, including those for testing and treating COVID-19 infections.

Particularly in countries that lag the furthest behind, poor health infrastructure and shortages of trained health personnel and medical equipment and supplies, such as personal protective equipment, diagnostic tools and ventilators, are undermining the enjoyment of the right to health.

To ensure a rapid and effective recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the process of transition of technology and knowledge about vaccines should be accelerated to all countries, also strengthening the manufacturing capacity and thus achieving a faster distribution and efficient to reach the largest number of people in the shortest time possible.

Now that the fight against COVID-19 is advancing with a powerful set of vaccines, it is time to reflect on the future of health systems beyond the moment we live, so that we can emerge from this crisis strengthened, resilient and increasingly prepared to respond to possible future health emergencies. The consulting firm PwC, with the support of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industry Associations (EFPIA), has prepared a report that identifies four strategic issues to guarantee the future of healthcare structures: working on prevention and early care, planning for the future, reap the fruits of digitization and focus on people and health outcomes.

Once the current crisis is overcome, we should not only focus on rebuilding economies globally, but we should also seize the opportunity to implement an ambitious health systems reform agenda. The world powers and the international organizations should generate a plan aimed at reinforcing the quality and quantity of the labour factor and promoting reforms that reinforce prevention, efficiency and knowledge in health, thus producing an effective instrument to redistribute income and bring closer to real equality of opportunities.

Another very important challenge is to guarantee universal access to quality education. Education is the basis for improving our lives and sustainable development, so access to quality education must be universal. In recent times, there have been important advances in relation to improving their access to all levels and with the increase in school enrolment rates, especially in the case of women and girls. Education is a right; it should not be just a dream.

The closures of educational spaces have affected 94% of the world's student population. This problem has been even more accentuated in countries with limited resources. Access gaps have increased due to the pandemic, reducing opportunities for masses of students from vulnerable populations.

The commitment to connectivity and universal access to the Internet should be a goal close in time as a response by governments to this crisis. It is about the inalienable and universal right to education that should entail in digital times, as we say, the right to connectivity, accessibility, and the minimum endowment of a technological device to make it a reality. These means of communication are much more widespread, they are accessible to the population and of proven efficacy to configure quality educational actions. Looking to the future, institutions must develop sustainable educational plans that can withstand the challenges and unknowns of this or other similar scenarios that may occur, be it for times of continuous or intermittent confinement, so that traumatic situations such as the ones lived in 2020 are not generated once again.

Digital education and connectivity infrastructures have allowed something that would have been impossible just a few decades ago: the continuity of training activity despite the closure of all face-to-face centres for months. However, it has not been a process without complications. Thus, countries must commit to reducing the digital divide and preparing education systems to respond effectively to the pandemic and the challenges of today's society, continuing to work to contribute to sustainable and inclusive development at a global level, promoting respect to human rights and social cohesion at all levels. The key to achieving this is access to the Internet, as it reduces logistics costs and facilitates access to information for people who otherwise could not.

For this reason, our non-governmental organization, Transdiaspora Network, re-developed our curriculum with the creation of an online platform to engage young people virtually and bridge the wellness gap among youth of low-income and immigrant backgrounds, incorporating the community's cultural values. This way, they are able to explore the difficulties or unfavourable factors they may encounter. Music as an art to generate moods, awaken feelings and convey emotions is one of the best ways to achieve intercultural coexistence and improve the common well-being of society as a whole. The implementation of this innovative educational space with music will help us to sensitize youth through music to act later preventing unfavourable and risk factors. Through music, we can promote behavioural changes, especially in the topics of health, education and gender violence. We would like to make use of music as a means of meditation, concentration and personal development. One of the principal goals of this new curriculum is to generate emotions and feelings

that assist them to assess risks and opportunities, improve their civic engagement and leadership skills.

One of the objectives of the United Nations for the year 2030 is that all the children of the world should complete primary and secondary education, which should be universally free, equitable and of quality.

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