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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**

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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.

* [E/CN.5/2013/L.2](#).



Statement

Only yesterday Cameroon was a developing country – today it is a heavily indebted poor country. Like many countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Cameroon is rich in human resources as well as in natural, mining and other resources. This discrepancy between the country's natural potential and its visible reality can be laid to the denial of human rights and the failure to respect the individual, as well as to corruption and poor governance. All these scourges represent real obstacles to poverty eradication, social integration, and decent work for all.

Fifty years after independence, Cameroon defines itself as a country with more than 260 ethnic groups, which I think is a real obstacle to development, for as Calixthe Beyala has said, a people needs to define itself by reference to a common memory, a way of thinking, a culture, and not solely to its ethnic roots. To be talking still today of ethnicity is one of the real causes of underdevelopment.

Eradicating poverty, which is a mission set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for the year 2015, requires our underdeveloped countries to adopt a new vision, a new orientation, a new social policy for integrating the young and the disadvantaged. More than ever, young people must be at the centre of development, and of policies for employment and social integration.

Job insecurity is a problem for everyone and for all sectors, for the country's economic context seems to fade when it comes to business management. As proof, we may cite the recruitment of 25,000 young people, launched by the President of the Republic of Cameroon in February 2011. That recruitment drew candidates from among young unemployed people and also young people who had better-paying jobs in private enterprises. The situation shows that there is a problem with employment stability in the private sector in Cameroon, and in several other countries of Africa.

Of 13 million economically active persons, fewer than 1 million have a stable job; the other 12 million are working in the informal sector, with no support and no guarantee of social security. Employment in general, and that of young people in particular, is one of the most crucial development problems in developing countries, especially those of sub-Saharan Africa, despite efforts and strategies by various governments to absorb the unemployed. There can be no developed country without a developed, healthy, strong youth that is involved not only in running the country but also in contributing to its growth. There will never be full employment or decent jobs in a country as long as its young people are excluded, forgotten and abandoned to themselves.

Achieving full employment requires, first of all, identifying sectors which, like agriculture, livestock, crafts and many others, will allow us to make a difference and to be heard in the concert of nations. Sectors that can foster development and attract young people to them, initially for specific training, and then for work.

Policymakers, first, and civil society next, each in its own way, must promote another form of development, they must make youth understand that the welfare state no longer exists. To develop, organize and support the private sector for full employment must be one of the main objectives of government. The State needs to be supported in this effort by other partners.

Social integration becomes a reality only when an individual or a group has the material and cultural resources that guarantee the means for participation in social

life. For example, having the financial means of existence is today a condition of sociability. The possession of a certain cultural, patriotic level is required in order to function fully as a citizen. It was for this reason that the National Civic Service Agency for Participation in Development was created in Cameroon. Social integration stands opposed to marginalization or social exclusion, but also to stigmatization and discrimination. No social integration is possible without a minimum degree of equality.

Faced with the scourges listed in the preceding paragraph, the strategy for promoting full employment and decent work for all in order to reduce poverty and discrimination must be, first of all, to bring about an overall change of mentality, in people's way of thinking, together with consolidation of the rule of law, democratic processes, and free access to education.

Below we have listed some strategies that can be implemented to achieve these objectives:

- Education in order to change people's mentality; literacy, formal and informal education for these people.
- Promotion of a macroeconomic framework to ensure efficient and rigorous management of the public purse.
- Equitable distribution of the fruits of growth, access to basic social services, such as food, education and health.
- Promotion of a diversified economy based on the potential of each region.
- Development of the private sector, by making gearing teaching more to vocational education (the Cameroonian education system is characterized by a great mismatch between training and employment, 65% of job seekers have diplomas but no skills).
- Development of basic infrastructure (roads, highways, dams, gas-fired power plants, etc.).
- Strengthening of institutional capacities: democratic institutions that function under a condition of sustainable development. Good governance must include the fight against corruption.
- Strengthening of democracy and good governance, which can only be achieved through:
 - o Decentralization.
 - o Greater empowerment of people.
 - o Transfer of skills and of human, technical and financial resources to grassroots communities.
 - o Improving social equity and social solidarity.
 - o Combatting corruption.
- Adoption by our countries of the right to development as a human right.
- Combatting the rural exodus, stressing integrated development programs.

To promote people's empowerment in order to pursue poverty eradication, social integration, full employment and decent work for all must be the major challenge for our governments, our political leaders, civil society, the private sector, and young people. We dare to believe that, in creating the National Civic Service Agency for Participation in Development, our governors have assessed the situation properly and now want to invite these young people, first of all, to cultivate a love of their country, respect for the flag. All these things must spark a real change of mentality and of political vision.
