



## 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 Agence de Développement Economique et Culturel Nord-Sud, a non-governmental organization in special 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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\* E/CN.5/2013/L.2.



## Statement

As the period established by the United Nations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals draws to a close, the advancements made over the past 13 years of commitment to progress may be more clearly discerned.

The eight ambitious goals, proclaimed in 2000 in a world very different from that of today, have not yet been fully achieved.

Nonetheless, some welcome changes have occurred in many fields as a result of the efforts of all the stakeholders involved in this programme.

The 2013 report on the Millennium Development Goals shows that the work accomplished by Governments, the United Nations, the private sector and civil society has led to a significant decrease in world poverty.

Target 1.A – to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day – has been met, thanks to the combined efforts of all these actors. By 2008, the rate of extreme poverty in the developing regions had been reduced to less than 24 per cent, compared to 47 per cent in 1990, but the challenge remains of further lowering this figure in the years to come.

Despite this success, it should be remembered that 12.5 per cent of the world's population suffers from hunger each day and that some emerging countries are still extremely fragile and, unfortunately, too dependent on the developed countries.

The Secretary-General, in his report to the Commission for Social Development in 2013, stressed the importance of empowerment as a “key driver of pro-poor growth, which contributes to improvements in health, education and productive employment and decent work for all”.

Ensuring full empowerment of people is the best way of ensuring that they have the opportunity to reveal their strengths and forge their own path to development.

The international community must do more than merely respond to humanitarian crises; it must propose truly cooperative activities to the countries of the South, which must be considered partners in a series of win-win exchanges.

The Midi-Pyrénées region of France is actively participating in these new types of interactions. Thus, it is taking part in the multi-year poverty reduction and social inclusion plan put in place by the French Government at the meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat Social Exclusion.

In this context, a regional debate took place on 11 July 2013 in Toulouse, bringing together communities, associations and institutions involved in combating poverty and promoting social inclusion.

Win-win exchanges are at the core of the activities of Agence de Développement Economique et Culturelle – Nord/Sud (ADEC-NS), which was granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2008; it promotes linkages between enterprises, institutions and universities in the Midi-Pyrénées region and their counterparts abroad. Through the events it sponsors, the agency demonstrates the possibility of envisaging global economic relations that are beneficial to all parties, and that the transfer of know-how, technologies and projects represents a sharing of wealth.

The exchanges that take place following the meetings organized by the agency with developing countries create local jobs and contribute know-how than can be transmitted to local participants in the enterprise. This is an initial step towards creating new sectors of competitiveness.

The agency's activities are not limited to economic linkages. It is also very active in setting up academic exchanges, and thus makes a significant contribution to ensuring access to education for all.

During the agency's multisectoral missions, agreements have been signed with French, Turkish, Uzbek and Hungarian universities to establish quality educational programmes and promote access to the job market. These agreements have resulted in many exchanges of students and researchers between the universities concerned.

The agency has also created more ad hoc educational projects, such as a course in dental surgery at the University of Bamako in Mali, the first and only course of its type in that country. The project was carried out through a partnership between the University of Bamako and the Universities of Toulouse III, Nantes and Marseille, with the support of the Association Francophone et Européenne d'Etudes et de Recherches Odontalgiques.

In pursuit of its goal of a more responsible, climate-friendly economy, the agency joined the Global Compact Network France in 2013; since its inception in 2000, the Compact has promoted 10 universal principles necessary for the beneficial development of all. These principles are focused on four major areas: human rights, working conditions, the environment and the fight against corruption. Thus, the agency is committed to encouraging and respecting the values of the Global Compact.

To this end, the agency will soon be organizing a conference with representatives of Global Compact Network France and Agence française de développement, whose primary mission is to help eradicate poverty in the developing countries of the South and ensure their access to education, jobs and health. The purpose of this meeting will be to demonstrate to enterprises the benefits of becoming involved in efforts to promote a sustainable development that respects both the environment and human beings.

The agency seeks sustainable collaboration with these bodies, for it shares and defends the same values and the same belief that economic activity must be a key driver of shared progress.

It is the agency's goal to acquire empowered and strong partners in the South, in order to fight poverty and to ensure that people control their own destinies.