



## 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: rethinking and strengthening social  
development in the contemporary world**

### **Statement submitted by The Children's Project, Inc., 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

### **Recognizing Children as the Foundation of the Social Development Agenda**

Advances in technology and communications have connected the human race together like at no other point in our shared history. Although this technological progress has spurred the economic transformation of many emerging economies, the era of connectivity has not had a similar impact on social integration. While the raw numbers of millions lifted out of poverty are indeed impressive, trends in economic inequality remain worrisome. Rising inequality reduces social mobility in developed countries and curtails the ability of emerging nations to maintain economic growth. Moreover, economic inequality and limited social mobility are contributing factors to social instability and conflict that can undo hard-won gains. Any development agenda that seeks to maintain a measure of sustainability must seek to create a strong social foundation upon which progress can rest.

Perhaps the strongest foundation for sustainable development is the generation which will grow up to inherit the world shaped by our development agenda and steward the nations and economies of tomorrow. Children are the basis upon which societies grow, thrive and propagate themselves and should be a primary focus of the social development agenda.

The Millennium Development Goals recognized the importance of empowering children and set a target of universal primary education by 2015. The Children's Project International (TCPI), a non-governmental organization dedicated to improving the lives of the world's children, has been proud to partner with the UN and organizations worldwide to achieve these educational goals by creating scholarship opportunities that impact communities of children, supporting institutions of learning in Africa and the Indian subcontinent as well as advocating for adoption of supportive policies at the international level.

Children require other material needs to flourish. A new-born who does not receive adequate healthcare may not grow up to receive their right to education. TCPI actively supports programs that provide mothers, new-borns and children with life-sustaining primary care. We leverage technology to create mobile clinics that can deliver aid where it is needed most. Children also require supplies, safe water and sanitation. Here we believe private-public partnerships hold promise to deliver materially to children in innovative and more efficient ways.

Policymakers should support efforts to research and explore opportunities for creative minds. Beyond material necessities, there are also emotional and spiritual needs that deserve recognition; above all is the right to a happy home. Cohesive and healthy families create the optimal environment to nurture a healthy, ethical citizenry. Families are society's natural "safety net" whose supportive structure can reach across generations and whose levels of altruism inform the child with basic notions of fairness and justice in society. Family stability is critical to healthy emotional and moral formation of children, and promotion of the family is the building block of society and paramount to the social development agenda.

Lastly, the social development agenda must tackle the thorny issues of sociocultural policy. Though primary education provides children with a basis for functioning in society, cultural gender-based barriers to secondary and higher

education limit the opportunity for girls to develop and realize their economic potential in society. Societies and governments must recognize the basic rights of girls to participate fully in society and fulfil their potential and to be included fully in society. Such an inclusive agenda can be transformative if policymakers resist more rigid, ideological approaches to gender. Gender policy need not be revolutionary to be inclusive.

Significant progress has been on the development front, but to maintain such progress requires the fostering of a social foundation among the world's children. By considering the child on a whole — their material needs, their emotional and spiritual needs and their right to justice — policymakers are poised to maximize the long-lasting potential of the development agenda.

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