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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 International Relations Students’ Association of McGill University, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

We, the International Students' Association of McGill (IRSAM), are a federally incorporated non-profit organization based out of McGill University in Montréal, Canada. We are the only active, fully student-run organisation with ECOSOC consultative status on the global stage. IRSAM is an independently run student group at the university, and directly represents a diverse cohort of McGill students. All of our programming is led by full time students who volunteer their time and effort to promote student engagement in global affairs, both within our university and in our respective local and international communities. This year will mark one decade of IRSAM consultative participation in UN conferences, and will be our first foray into the Commission for Social Development (CSocD).

We believe that IRSAM participation at CSocD allows us to form a crucial link between student experience and international diplomacy, enabling discourse and inspiring engagement. As the only student-run organization actively involved in the Commission, our presence not only provides students with the opportunity to directly engage global leaders on key topics in development but also creates a venue for leaders to draw upon the youth perspective. Our diverse delegation draws youth from all walks of life and academic backgrounds united in the goal of analysing and making progress in the complex challenges and issues around gender equality. Ultimately, IRSAM provides a uniquely direct and tangible connection to a diverse, politically aware student body free of interference from any larger organization.

The 70th Anniversary of the United Nations has been marked as a time for reflection. We have seen success, failure, tragedy and co-operation on the global scale. How we respond to these events must reflect current discourses and conditions. The Millennium Goals have come and gone, ushering in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals with targets suited for the world we live in today. In light of this, it is fitting that the priority theme of the 54th Session of the Commission on Social Development is "Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world." We believe that lessons from the contemporary world show that social development must be sustainable. Policies and international diplomacy must reflect this fact.

CSocD53 marked the 20th anniversary of the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, where global leaders coalesced en masse to address the urgent need for international action in the matters of social exclusion, poverty, unemployment and other related issues. We believe that in the next 20 years of social development, youth will play a critical role in the foundational aspects of strengthening our communities, building networks and innovating for the future. More than ever, we are seeing young people at the forefront of civil movements, inspiring entire nations with their ideas and enthusiasm. As such, the future of our society must be built on a foundation of actively engaged youth who are invested in societal development. IRSAM has and will continue to represent the vital voice of the youth, and inspire them to continue working towards the development of an equitable global society for all.