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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 African Heritage Foundation Nigeria, 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

Reviewing progress so far made in social development and rethinking of ways to strengthening it in this our contemporary world is timely and a welcome development.

The current discussions on follow-up and implementation of the newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a critical space for reflection on the future contours of development assistance, and an opportunity to rethink the social dimensions of the process of transformation necessary for sustainability: therefore rethinking social development t leads to exploration of some of the challenges to eradicating poverty. This re-thinking, in the context of the new agenda, will refocus many of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals towards a broad-based agenda that can realise the ambitions of poverty eradication and a sustainable development path.

Social development should be seen as a process of structural and societal change through which individuals and social groups attain improvements associated with the well-being and compatible with justice, according to (UNRISD, 2011). Despite the increasing attention to social issues in the Agenda 2030, the structural and societal dimensions remained largely absent from the mainstream policy discourse and decision-making. As such, social issues are frequently treated as problematic consequences of other changes and social policy as residual in the sequencing of policy decisions. In effect, social, environmental or other consequences or externalities of growth-focused economic policies are addressed through compensation measures, such as social assistance or targeted poverty alleviation processes.

Indeed, on the social embeddedness of economic institutions, social issues continued to be marginalized in policy discourse and debate, with disciplinary barriers constructed between the analyses of the sectors. This is particularly evident in the treatment of the family, the elderly, the physically challenged and other indigent peoples and the lack of attention to unpaid care work, as significant attention is not focussed on economic and financial volatility crises, and on the levels of inequalities that generates social instability and impede economic development processes.

Transforming economics, therefore, will obviously ensure adequate livelihoods, incomes and well-being for all in an increasing globalized world.

The general objectives of this work are on how to address not only the conventional objectives associated with social protection and human capital formation, but also on issues of economic and gender justice, rising inequalities, precarious employment and unsustainable development. How social policy can be used beyond its protective function to play a transformative and developmental role is also important, as social protection is now widely recognized as an essential contributor to development. We need to examine if social and solidarity economy can be a key mechanism through which people living in poverty gain greater control over resources and decision-making processes.

The purpose of re-thinking and strengthening social development the contemporary world are:

To ensure that progress in one domain is not undermined by consequences or reactions in another domain.

To verify strategies to dominate the significant inequalities which remain and have left many of the most vulnerable groups (mostly women and the children) in the society to be left behind.

To examine the possibilities of placing human person at the centre of development and encourage investments and policies that will meet their needs according to expectations.

To work to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor by focusing on the tremendous value of the family to society, where every human being receives his or her primary education and formative development.

To consider the research topic as it relates to the work of the African Heritage Foundation Nigeria, being an international NGO working with other international organizations.

African Heritage Foundation Nigeria carries out humanitarian and charitable support services to victims of war, natural and manmade disasters; particularly to states, regions, nations that experience boundary clashes, disputes, terrorism etc.

The organization pays attention to the welfare of the most vulnerable such as women and children as they are often overlooked in the name of greater productivity, efficiency and economic growth. Even when universal policies and programs could not be enforced through more targeted approaches that addresses the needs of the organization we adopt social policy for promoting fundamental values of social inclusion, gender and social justice, solidarity, equity, respect for nature and human rights. With the levels and position of the organization in social development, it strives to co-coordinate, design and implement interventions across different fields, even when faced complex and interrelated challenges. The organization promotes social integration of internally displaced persons and poor people The African Heritage Foundation Nigeria provided relief materials to the victims of conflict, strife and extremists in Jos, Northern Nigeria, in 2010. The Organization provided welfare materials to the Little Orphanage Homes, Lagos, the Southern Nigeria, in 2013 to cater for the children affected by their parents death as a result of HIV/AIDS, conflicts, strife, boundary clashes etc.

We regularly visit the destitute, orphanages, motherless babies' homes, and refugee camps.

Remaining challenges:

Adopting strategies that provide humanity the same opportunities for a life with dignity and freedom can be only achieved by working in collaboration with other organizations around the world.

The inability of African Heritage Foundation Nigeria to pay sufficient attention to the relationship between development and the environment on the global scale.

Problems of exclusion and entrenched discriminations require sustained policy efforts as well as change in societal values and norms.

Rising levels of economic and social inequality that weaken the efforts of the organization in contributing to poverty eradication, which has undermined the prospects for equitable long-term development processes.

Promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and changing unsustainable practices, as well as protecting and managing the natural resource base on economic and social development agendas.

Support people-centred sustainable development, without distinction of any kind encouraging better relationships with UN bodies, agencies and its subsidiaries.

Connect economic growth, the wellbeing of people, employment, and environmental concerns such as climate change, to enable a transition to green jobs.

Several sectorial policies need to be examined simultaneously with a practical approach. Sustaining non-agricultural employment growth with a greater focus on diversification of the economy, whereby enough employment could be generated for the growing youth population. Paying attention to political strategies, advocacy, and linkages — rather than policy formation that will not stand the test of time.

Strengthening social development and social integration needs in order to harmonize groups and a targeted approach with the broader aim of a better society all. These could be achieved enhancing social cohesion, built into other policies.

It is expected that the vision and principles of social development would contribute not only to protecting vulnerable groups, but also to reducing poverty and inequalities, improving economic productivity and creating socially cohesive societies around the world. The social goals and social dimensions of economic and environmental goals need to be addressed to strengthen social development and its linkage with other two dimensions.

Social development needs to be tackled through three angles:

Investment, integration and interlink ages.

There should be a conceptual shift in the global partnership for development to policy coherence to accomplish sustainable development. There is need to provide a strong foundation for achieving social development as well as economic development. The shifting contexts and priorities of social development should be captured, analysed and addressed, such as widening inequality, injustice, environmental threats, global economic and financial integration and the growing economic uncertainty in the nations of the world. Government should ensure that economic developments are accompanied by social progress and well-being of all people, supported by effective social policies, and environmental protection. The enhancement of social cohesion must be built into other policy objectives to achieve a successful result. Finally, it is important to invest in data collection (especially disaggregated data) and develop good indicators.

To strengthen social development the government and particularly the Commission for Social Development need to strengthen the social dimensions of sustainable development and to focus on clear social goals, as well as the social dimensions of economic and environmental goals. Hence, development is the outer-realization of latent inner potentials, believing that as aspiration emerges, qualities of people's attitudes, values, skills, and information affects the extent and pace of development.