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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: strategies for the eradication of poverty
to achieve sustainable development for all**

Statement submitted by Fraternité Notre Dame, 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

Fraternite Notre Dame, a missionary working at the service of the poor, was founded by His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie Kozik, whose concern is to eradicate poverty on earth.

What do we mean by poverty?

Poverty is not only material but can also be moral and spiritual. As Christians, our duty is to contribute in setting up durable strategies towards the eradication of poverty.

That is for what Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik strives in all the missions that he has founded. Christian missionary works have always striven to help the poor.

Most Rev. Bishop Jean Marie feeds thousands of poor persons in soup kitchens and food pantry programs in the US as well as in Haiti and Niger. Many persons have testified how, thanks to such daily support, they were able to find a job.

Many were also saved from an imminent death. The religious nuns, friars and priests who serve the poor also bring them support and comfort and testify about miracles obtained through prayer.

Tackling poverty also means providing ill persons in need and the elderly with valuable care and offering medical help which, in our developed countries, are very accessible, but appear as unaffordable luxury to unfortunate sick and abandoned people in under-developed countries. Bishop Jean Marie has opened dispensaries in Haiti and Niger.

Many health centers in Europe have unfortunately become “money plants” managed by technocrats who care neither for the good or the patients, nor decent working conditions for the medical staff, the aim being a profitable hospital.

Halting poverty does not only consist in halting material poverty. Moral and spiritual poverty are a great plague for today’s humanity. Contemporary societies always demand rights. But there are no human rights without human duties.

Perversion in the training and education of the youth corrupts the society of tomorrow, instead of fostering its development: this also is another form of poverty to be halted. Children are no longer taught their duties towards their parents and neighbors.

Sectarian ideologies have corrupted education. We should no longer be surprised to see violence, drugs, crime and sexual perversion taking over the schools.

Teaching the duty to respect other people’s religion needs to come together with explaining that freedom of expression should not be mistaken with freedom to insult religions.

Tackling moral poverty as a source of decadence also means warning the youth on the dangers of certain types of music which induce them to commit crimes or suicide, or to revolt against their parents and the authority, and contribute to the decline of society: how many suicides and crimes committed by children under the daily influence of such types of music?

His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik has founded free schools for destitute children, not only transmitting knowledge, culture, languages and traditions, but also the learning of moral values, a sense of respect for others, mutual aid, respect for the parents and the elderly, informing children of the dangers that lie in being mentally enslaved to the internet and mobile phone.

In Niger, Bishop Jean Marie has opened a primary and secondary school that welcomes over 800 students. He has done the same in the USA.

Handing down the truth when it comes to history is also necessary, as many academic history manuals have transformed the historical reality: “A healthy mind in a healthy body” was taught to us by our grandparents.

Why, when it comes to teaching and education, do people always reform and reject the deposit of our grandparents, who have set their mark? Most Rev. Bishop Jean Marie has opened schools available to the poor, to combat the moral and spiritual poverty of the youth.

The godless have a clear conscience of the former benefits of Christian schools, we only need recall some famous Christian founders of schools and hospitals.

These few thoughts well illustrate that our societies with no Faith or law favor poverty. But poverty is not a fatality. It may be stopped. The duty of wealthy countries is to help poor countries.
