



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

### **Statement submitted by the Fundación América Solidaria Internacional, 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

Ending poverty in all its forms in all the world is the first of the 17 objectives of the 2030 Agenda, driven by a specific call to action: “We are the first generation that can end poverty, and the last generation that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change,” stated then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon. In América Solidaria, an organization whose primary cause is to overcome childhood poverty in the Americas, we adhere to this call and propose one point of departure and four concrete strategies for doing so.

We know that poverty mainly affects households with children in our region, and that the 42% of children and youths who live in poverty in the Latin American region are experiencing a violation of their rights. As the authors of the report *Pobreza Infantil: conceptos e indicadores* argue, “There is now strong scientific evidence that shows how poverty and social exclusion have an impact on growth, development (cognitive, behavioural and emotional) and the health of children, in particular when its effects are imposed continuously from early life stages” (Terra et al., 1987; GIEP, 1996 y 2007).

Working with childhood is not only a matter of justice, then, it is sensible, effective and efficient. This takes us to the starting point, which is the explicit guarantee in each of our countries of what has driven the International Labor Organization (ILO) in conjunction with United Nations agencies: we are talking about the *Piso de Protección Social Universal* (Universal Social Protection), an effective tool for accelerating poverty eradication as it provides families with networks to handle crisis in minimum conditions of well-being.

Universal Social Protection is therefore a point of departure, and within it the role of the state is central, but so are families, the market, private and social organizations, so that a comprehensive system of protection should take into account their interactions. Understanding child poverty as a complex phenomenon directly linked to exclusion, inequality, social injustice and the violation of rights, we understand it as a “wicked problem” in the terminology proposed by H. W. J. Rittel and M. M. Webber (1973).

At this point, we propose the first strategy for overcoming child poverty: wicked problems require integrated forces to solve them, that is, work articulated and coordinated between different actors with different expertise. As promoted through the *Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness* (2010), the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation* (2011) and today driven by Sustainable Development Goal 17, we propose to create a model for international multi-actor cooperation incentives for overcoming child poverty.

Specifically, this means: (1) an agenda of awareness-raising on the value of the partnerships for development; (2) an agenda of decreasing the barriers to multi-actor cooperation, such as double taxation and visas for cooperation and volunteer actors; and (3) the creation of competitive grants for initiatives that integrate partnerships in international cooperation.

In América Solidaria, we have been able to explore this path of building networks and alliance through some projects, such as the reconstruction project for the *Escuela República de Chile* in Haiti. After the earthquake of January 2010, this school was left in ruins, like close to 5,000 others in the rest of the country. The Government of Chile and its international cooperation agency for development (AGCID), the Embassy of Chile and the Ministry of Education of Haiti, private company *Komatsu Cummins* and non-profit *América Solidaria* assumed the challenge, later joined by *Universidad Pontificia Católica de Chile* as the technical

advisor through its school of construction and faculty of education. This reconstruction project was so urgent and moving that 17 schools in Chile conducted fundraising campaigns organized by students and family groups, and three companies joined the cause. Also, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) provided the equipment and consultant Habiterra the design, and many others anonymously supported the project.

Integrating and coordinating distinct perspectives is not easy in a cross-sectoral and international project. However, the sense of achievement persisted along with the aspiration to ensure children's dignity, education and quality of life. This is a project notable for co-management, starting with a rich participatory process with the school community for the design of the building and following a model of governance that guaranteed horizontal decision-making, promoting the joint responsibility and transfer of learning between different actors. This work allowed us to see that the incorporation of new actors in international cooperation is essential. The fruits of these partnerships are bi-directional, contributing to the area of intervention and impacting our country by forcing us to work together for one greater good.

A second strategy to overcome childhood poverty has to do with incentives and strategies for strengthening civil society in each of our countries and their international networks. Strong and healthy democracies are those where civil society organizations have the capacity and space to represent and grow.

Sharing the vision of CSO Partnership — “the actors of civil society (CSOs) are highly affected by the environment in which they operate. The policies and practices of governments affect and determine the capacity of CSOs to participate in development. Therefore, progress in achieving the Istanbul Principles in the practices of civil society organizations depends largely on enabling policies, laws, and governmental norms consistent with the Istanbul Principles” — we propose then: (1) transversal recognition of the role of civil society in overcoming childhood poverty, urging public bodies to consult and encourage the participation of the sector in the generation and development of strategies and policies in this line; (2) promote the emergence of networks of civil society organizations, causing processes of knowledge sharing and collaborative construction of projects for overcoming child poverty; (3) encourage the creation of various forms of financing that will promote the work and associativity of civil society organizations; and (4) encourage private donations to civil society organizations, through up-to-date donation laws to promote the generation of new organizations and also allow international donation.

A third strategy for overcoming childhood poverty, is incentivizing and promoting volunteering in poverty-alleviating development projects. United Nations recognizes volunteering as a form of appropriation of the 2030 Agenda; however, this recognition has failed to materialize in local laws and international agreements that promote it. In this sense, we require that each country have volunteering law that adequately regulates national and international volunteering and international specific regulations that address aspects of permits, visas, and social protection, among others.

Finally, a fourth strategy has to do with the implementation of the agenda for development education promoted by UNESCO and promoting spaces of participation, reflection and youth-led proposals about the Sustainable Development Goals. América Solidaria, together with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and UNICEF, created Concausa, an initiative that seeks to foster and disseminate proposals for social innovation that young people are developing in their communities, appropriating the 2030 Agenda.

Through these strategies and concrete plans of action, we propose the construction of a fabric, a strong and articulated network, for overcoming childhood poverty. This multi-actor network allows multidimensional understanding from different perspectives about the main causes of child poverty and relevant and robust ways to overcome it.

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