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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: Inclusive and resilient recovery from
COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity
for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and
dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

**Statement submitted by Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of
the Good Shepherd, International Presentation Association,
Sisters of Charity Federation, and UNANIMA International,
non-governmental organizations 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

Introduction

The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd welcomes the theme of the 60th Session of the Commission on Social Development (CSocD), ‘Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda.’ These issues are interrelated but addressing them individually is not enough. COVID-19 widened gaps and further exposed the systems and structures that leave people without dignity.

There is a ruthlessness that lives in neo-liberal capitalism, and in our world economies; informal workers are replaceable cogs in an uncaring hyper-capitalist machine and vulnerable people are expendable. Concepts such as inclusivity, social and emotional well-being, equality, and justice, including gender and environmental justice appear to be irrelevant. Interconnectivity, and ecosystems where people and projects can develop and thrive are not part of the vision of neo-liberal capitalism. In his most recent report, the Special Rapporteur on Poverty and Human Rights highlights that poverty is cyclical. Intergenerational cycles of poverty have not been undone through trickle-down economics. The root cause is systemic and demands systems change. This is clearly evidenced when we see increasing levels of poverty, mounting food insecurity, malnutrition, and vaccine scarcity in a world where multinationals increased their wealth in the height of the pandemic and financial institutions are floating austerity measures.

The twenty-first century “is witnessing a weakening of the power of nation states, chiefly because the economic and financial sectors, being transnational, tend to prevail over the political” (Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis, Para 172.) This is the real obstacle to eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions. In a recent statement, Pope Francis released his *Nine Commandments to a Just Economy*, all of which call on the wealthy and the powerful, the pharmaceutical and food industries, the financial and credit institutions, the tech and telecommunications giants, the arms industry, as well as powerful countries, governments, and politicians of all parties to move from their practices towards ones that create inclusion and accessibility for all. Our organization echoes the words of Pope Francis who urged governments and politicians of all parties “to represent their people and to work for the common good.” The Pope continued “stop listening exclusively to the economic elites,” who tend to “ignore humanity’s real dilemmas” and serve instead “the people who demand land, work, housing and good living.”

The global community faces a critical choice, as the world begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic: stay as we are or finally address the systems and structures that have long marginalized millions. Now is the critical moment when political will is required to shift from ideologies that amass and destroy towards ones that foster the wellbeing of people and planet.

Gender Dynamics

The COVID-19 pandemic was not the great equalizer that it was originally claimed to be. Almost two years into the pandemic and it has become clear that women and girls were disproportionately affected by COVID-19. The intersections of race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, ability, and citizenship further impacted wellbeing during the pandemic. Today, vaccine distribution is disproportionately reaching the world’s rich. This is a systems and structures issue. According to the World Health Organization, as of mid-April 2021, developed countries had secured more than 87 percent of the of Covid-19 vaccines dispensed worldwide, while least

developed countries had received only 0.2 percent. A recent report issued by EURODAD (December 2020) highlights that Private Public Partnership advocates claim they bring financing, efficiency and innovation but real-life experience reveals a different picture. A growing body of evidence across Europe shows that Private Public Partnerships are proving to be poor value for money, and that, far from just being teething problems, many of these issues are getting worse with time and continue to reinforce structural inequalities. *The Global Manifesto for Public Services: The Future is Public* indicates that private public partnerships exacerbated national and global inequalities and states that universal quality public services are the foundation of a fair and just society. They constitute a social pact that implements the core values of solidarity, equality, and human dignity. Public services are also an effective way to pool resources to confront collective challenges and meet shared needs.

The burden of the pandemic on girls and women and other marginalized people cannot be ignored. Women are more likely to hold care positions and participate in the care economy. They took on more work during the pandemic in the home and continued to work jobs that became increasingly precarious during the pandemic: nurses, home-health workers, domestic workers, teachers, and low-wage workers. Many women were forced out of the workforce to take on childcare and elder care that could not be outsourced during the pandemic. Research out of Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand province highlights the emergence of a new cohort experiencing poverty referred to in the report as the ‘New Vulnerable’ – people who have been impacted by job loss due to COVID-19. This population is more likely to come from low-income and female-held jobs. This is a structural issue where market dominates and there is little attention given to implementation of a strong human rights informed public policy framework that priorities social protection. Rather, private-public partnerships are the norm and Covid-19 geopolitics is the game.

Solutions

The increasing corporate capture of food systems, based on the industrialization of agriculture, food production and distribution, has generated food insecurity and hunger. This model is a biased problem analysis which ignores both the structural determinants of hunger, climate crisis and inequality, and local community solutions that already exist. The Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF) is invested in communities that are most likely to slip through the cracks of government social protection programs. In 2020, 61,558 people were involved in GSIF sponsored programs that positively changed their lives. During the COVID-19 pandemic 83,149 people, 76% of which were not involved in government social protection programs, in 25 countries were supported by GSIF programming and emergency assistance. Faith-based organizations continually fill these gaps and so we call on governments to step up and provide human rights based universal social protection systems.

In Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, GSIF is facilitating programming that empowers women and girls through sustainable agriculture and farming practices. These programs empower girls, women and the local community by mitigating and reversing the consequences of mining, fossil-fuel dependence, climate change and gender based violence, through the adoption of resilient and sustainable agricultural models embedded in good agro-ecological practices in the supply chain, supporting small women farmers to recover pieces of territory and manage criteria and natural resources, strengthening skills and offering development opportunities for the local economy. The overall goal is realizing that safe and sustainable agricultural practices and providing food security, while respecting human rights, engaging women’s leadership, and valuing the environment are not only possible but achievable.

Recommendations:

In line with the Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2021 report, we call for economic justice based on human rights, the reversal of trends towards privatizing, outsourcing and systematic dismantling of public services, and the provision of quality universal healthcare, education, and social protection, embedded in a care economy.

We urge all governments to:

- Make the seismic shift towards having people and planet at the center;
 - Reform the global financial architecture;
 - Institute tax reform;
 - Create social dialogues at national and local levels to educate and engage people in the ‘New Social Contract and New Global Deal’;
 - Implement universal social protection measures that address the need for income security for all with targeted measures towards women and universal child benefits.
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