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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 Salesian Missions and Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo, 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

Salesian Missions, represents the Salesians of Don Bosco serving the young, especially marginalized and in poverty, in over 135 countries.

The priority theme of the 60th Session of the Commission for Social Development focusing on the consequences from COVID-19 is an important and integral part of our vision and mission for the young. We accomplish this mission by accompanying them through their years of education; academic and professional, through skills training, ensuring their gainful employment. Education for children and youth empowerment for meaningful participation in nation building, skills training oriented to employability and Decent Work can never be over-emphasized for an Inclusive, resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and dignity for all. Poverty and hunger cannot be eradicated without this commitment.

Covid-19 accentuates all the earlier fault-lines and hits the poor hardest. An additional 207 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030, bringing the total number to more than a billion. It threatens millions of children and young people with food insecurity. 1.2 billion children are out of school and globally more than 24 million children are at risk of dropping out. In 2019 for 310 million poor children, school was ALSO where their nutritional needs were met.

“Even before the pandemic, young people were three times more likely to be unemployed than older workers. When COVID-19 hit, impacts on employment were more than twice as bad for the young.” (Our Future Agenda). A recent study conducted in 112 countries among 12,000 youth finds the pandemic impact on young people to be systematic, deep and disproportionate, impacting especially young women, younger youth in developed and lower-income countries.

The proportion of young people not in employment, education or training remained stubbornly high over the past 15 years and now stands at 30 per cent for young women and 13 per cent for young men worldwide. “There are presently 71 million young people unemployed, and many millions more are in precarious or informal work” (World Youth Report: Youth and 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development).

“Recent estimates suggest that 600 million jobs would have to be created over the next 15 years to meet youth employment needs. Finding decent work can be especially difficult for this demographic”. (Youth Social Entrepreneurship and 2030 Agenda - 2020 report)

Societal failure to address labour market youth vulnerabilities and lack of jobs for youth has the potential to have significant negative effects on health, emotional well-being, happiness, crime levels and sociopolitical stability.

In “Our Future Agenda” the youth note their concern for the environment and how addressing these issues and working for a greener economy could create 24 million jobs by 2030. Youth and children together account for nearly 40 percent of the world’s population. We cannot ignore their vision and aspirations laid out in “Our Future Agenda”.

Moreover, “Our Common Agenda” the report of the Secretary-General, reiterates; “now is the time to think for the long term, to deliver more for young people and succeeding generations and to be better prepared for the challenges ahead. Our Common Agenda includes recommendations for meaningful, diverse and effective youth engagement both within and outside the United Nations, including through better political representation and by transforming education, skills training and lifelong learning”.

In this affirmation, Salesians of Don Bosco see the vindication of their own predilection to work for the youth especially those from the most marginalized, discriminated, excluded communities heeding the call of Agenda 2030 “Leaving No One Behind”; commitment concretized in a very special way during the continuing crisis brought upon by the Covid.

The specific inclusion of youth employment in Sustainable Development Goals Target 8.6, and the youth dimensions of Targets 8.5 and 8.7 are policy directions helping anchor our efforts to provide employment for the youth and ensure that No One Is Left Behind.

In India, Bosconet, South Asia reached over 6 million vulnerable people to ensure food and health security from the onset of COVID pandemic, 50% of them mostly young migrants and daily wage workers. 9,278 job seekers were provided career counselling, 3,592 were given skill training, with the support of 705 recruiters 5,100 were provided jobs. This was possible due to our collaboration with the government and the corporate sector.

In Dodoma (Tanzania), and Embu (Kenya) the Agriculture Innovation and Technology Centre, a Don Bosco affiliate, in collaboration with CultivAid - Israel and Water 4 Mercy – a United States based Non-Governmental Organization, trains students for enhancing food security in the country.

Funded by the German Federal Ministry 400 Don Bosco Technical and Vocational Education Training centre managers in Africa and Madagascar are mentored through the International Labour Organization – covering 110 training centers in 34 countries, to ensure quality in Skills development and Entrepreneurship training

In the Philippines (Cebu City, Davao Oriental, Negros Occidental, Liloilo, Calauan, Naga City, San Jose Nueva Ecija, Makati City) Salesians of Don Bosco established training centres with the collaboration of 169 national and multinational partners. 1,315 youth received employment skills and were gainfully employed.

Salesians in Samoa, in partnership with Samoa Water Authority, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Samoa Shipping Corporation, Schneider, Toyota, Mitsubishi provide skills training and entrepreneurial development.

In Buenaventura, Colombia – a city of 300,000 where drug trafficking has led to the nation’s highest murder rate – Salesians train 900 youths in woodworking, welding, and other practical skills and help them take up entrepreneurial ventures after graduation.

In Italy, Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo, Salesian Missions, thanks to United States Agency for International Development, implemented “Salesian Solidarity with Italy: The Emergency Response to COVID-19” reached over 20,000 people from vulnerable segments of the population (teachers, children, young people, migrants) in 16 Italian regions.

In Spain, Coordinadora Estatal de Plataformas Sociales Salesianas, reached 41,689 vulnerable young through 165 employment projects carried out by 620 staff in 2020, mobilizing them to participate in post-Covid recovery campaign, “Jovenes en Positivo”, aligned with the UN Agenda of the Youth to present young as committed and equal partners in “Our Common Agenda”.

Recommendations

Reverse cuts to education budgets and implement an education recovery plan through additional budgetary allocation to make up for lost learning and to recover from the educational crisis caused by Covid-19.

Ensure all barriers preventing children from marginalized communities to access education, including discriminatory legislation and policies, school fees, lack of technology and internet access are removed in letter and spirit.

Connect governments, businesses, philanthropists, and donors to create scholarships and exchange programs that increase student mobility and open doors for young people from marginalized communities.

Ensure implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 4 target 7, by incorporating human rights awareness, global citizenship education and environmental education so that children grow up as responsible citizens capable of engaging with their governments in decision making, upholding, and defending the rights of all.

Abide by the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization in shaping national strategies for youth employment and commit to its Decent Work Agenda, ensuring living wages to address poverty and inequality.

Provide more skills training and preparation for the world of work for youths including partnerships with private sector industries to provide jobs for trained youths and also to promote sustainable entrepreneurship among them.

Provide training and support for young people working in fossil fuels and other carbon-intensive industries to re-skill and enter new sectors.

Remove legal and regulatory barriers preventing young people to register and set up businesses, making it easier for young entrepreneurs to open bank accounts and access other essential financial services.

Legislate, and enforce existing laws, to ensure that all employers provide young workers with dignified, well-compensated, and fulfilling work, and offer benefits that improve well-being, development, and personal growth.
