



# 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: 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 Sisters of Charity Federation,  
Company of the Daughters of Charity, Congregation of the  
Mission, International Association of Charities,  
International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul,  
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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

We are Faith-based organizations belonging to the Vincentian Family with over two million members, working in 155 countries to restore dignity to people through eradication of poverty, hunger and homelessness. Through systemic change, we are enabling people living in poverty to identify the root causes of poverty, hunger and lack of decent jobs, and create strategies to change structures that keep them in poverty.

COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest global crisis, affecting the health, economic and social wellbeing of people everywhere. The pandemic debilitated the health and wellbeing of over 242 million people diagnosed with COVID-19, and took the lives of over 4.9 million people. Progress made during the past decades in employment generation, eradication of poverty and hunger were reversed in many parts of the world. According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021, 255 million full time jobs were lost. The International Labour Organization reported that working hours fell by 8.8%. Loss of jobs and livelihoods adversely affected vulnerable groups – people working in small and medium enterprises, farm workers, informal sector workers, especially women employed as domestic workers, caregivers and unpaid care work, refugees and migrants. They had either limited or no access to social protection measures, stimulus benefits, and health care. The pandemic pushed 119–124 million people into extreme poverty in 2020. In fact, people living in areas where no poverty existed prior to the pandemic are experiencing poverty today.

Right from the onset of the pandemic, the world witnessed the increasing impact of hunger on millions of people around the world. According to Food and Agricultural Organization, 2.3 billion lacked year-round access to adequate food and one in ten people - 811 million go to bed on an empty stomach. 150 million people in 55 countries are experiencing extreme food insecurity. Women have a 10 percent higher chance of being food-insecure than men. Global hunger is not the result of lack of food, there is enough food to feed everyone. In fact, one third of all the food produced (worth \$1 trillion) is wasted. Hunger is the result of inequality and lack of inclusive policies; millions of families are unable to afford and access nutritious food, and often they are excluded from food systems by geography, politics and conflicts. Food security and nutrition are a global concern today. Every minute 11 are dying from acute hunger linked to conflicts, climate crisis and COVID-19.

Smallholder farmers, including women farmers, not only provide sustainable livelihoods, but also ensure food security in rural areas around the world. Most of the world's hungry live in rural areas and 50% of the world's hungry are smallholder farmers and these farmers are adversely affected by the slow on-set of climate change, like droughts, floods and land degradation. The loss and damage they have incurred due to climate change are forcing them to migrate in search of livelihoods. They also often lack land rights and have minimal access to sustainable and climate resistant seeds, farming techniques and financial assistance to maintain their livelihoods and food security. They are also threatened with corporate land grabs for industrial agriculture in many parts of the world.

Social Protection systems are a lifeline and a human right. Although countries took 1400 social protection measures to provide cash transfers during the pandemic, only 1.1 billion people benefited from them. While rich countries spent \$695 per person, low-income and emerging countries spent between \$28 and \$4 towards social protection. Oxfam research showed that 2.7 billion people had no social protection to cope with the pandemic. According to International Labour Organization, only 30.6 percent of the global population is covered by comprehensive social protection

systems. This means that 69.4 percent, or 5.41 billion are not protected, or only partially covered when the pandemic hit.

The pandemic exposed the lack of international cooperation and global solidarity to formulate a global agenda to share resources for the sake of the common good. Though no one is safe until all are safe, vaccine nationalism and hoarding are the current reality. Vaccine inequity will have the biggest impact on the most vulnerable people in poorest countries. According to available data, 76% of all vaccines have been administered in high-and upper-middle-income countries and only 0.5% of doses have been administered in low-income countries. Vaccine inequality will affect the resilient recovery in these countries resulting in increased poverty and hunger.

People living in poverty, often employed in informal/frontline sectors also lack access to healthcare. Though access to healthcare is a human right, it is the privilege of few. In the absence universal healthcare to all people, out of pocket spending on healthcare is a contributing factor for poverty.

Access to quality education and lifelong learning for all, especially women and girls is a prerequisite for sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing. High levels of illiteracy will perpetuate intergenerational poverty. Lack of technical and vocational skill sets among women and men push them into the informal sector where without access to benefits they continue to languish in poverty.

During the pandemic, 3.6 billion people with no internet access were denied their rights to social, political, economic, financial inclusion, access to education, jobs, basic services and benefits. Digital literacy and technologies must be available, affordable and accessible for all those left behind.

A resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihood requires the full implementation of SDG 8.5: 'By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.' Equal pay is essential for resilient recovery.

Although homelessness is a complex issue, it often results from a lack of decent employment with a living wage to afford housing. The pandemic and the current climate crisis is forcing more people into homelessness. Being homeless is not a conscious choice for the 150 million people who are homeless or the 1.6 billion people who live in inadequate housing. Affordable and adequate housing with supportive services is essential to end homelessness.

### **Recommendations:**

Implement in its entirety, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for it provides the framework for resilient recovery and restore dignity to people through eradication of poverty and hunger.

Promote policies with budgetary allocations for universal social protection systems for all workers, including workers in informal economy.

Implement SDG 8.5 by investing in decent jobs and livelihoods, including in care economy and renewable energy for resilient recovery.

Promote living wage/family wage for workers to end multidimensional poverty and ensure their human rights to food, housing, utilities, education, transportation, healthcare and childcare without additional government support.

Ensure just transition through training and reskilling to provide employment opportunities for workforce impacted by the decarbonization of the economy.

Develop national policies to support small-scale farmers to protect their landholdings from corporate land grabs to ensure sustainable livelihoods, food security, availability of fresh nutritious food in rural areas and food deserts to end hunger.

Provide smallholder and women farmers, with climate resistant seeds, sustainable agricultural methods, digital technology and climate finance for adaptation, mitigation and the loss and damage they have incurred.

Eliminate restricted land rights for women, give access to financial resources, and involve them in rebuilding processes, using their practical experience and wisdom.

Invest in programs to detect impending conflicts and peace building processes to end hunger and poverty.

Invest in infrastructure development for electricity and digital connectivity and digital literacy to people to access education, skills training, decent jobs, and basic services to eradicate poverty and hunger and their well-being.

Invest in affordable and climate compatible housing to end homelessness and provide housing stability with supportive services.

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