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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: Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Statement submitted by Salesian Missions, 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 the 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 135 countries.

The priority theme of the 61st Session of the Commission for Social Development – Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – is an important and integral part of the vision and mission of Salesians of Don Bosco for the young. As we accompany the young through their years of education; academic and professional, we build their capacity for gainful employment. A resilient and sustainable recovery from Covid 19 and the present economic recession cannot be achieved without this commitment to enable the young, the lock-down generation – to find decent work.

The Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people; confirms the fact that the pandemic has exacerbated the numerous labor market challenges facing those aged between 15 and 24 years. They have experienced a much higher percentage loss in employment than adults since early 2020. The total global number of unemployed youths is estimated to reach 73 million in 2022. The report also reveals that the share of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in 2020 – the latest year for which a global estimate is available – rose to 23.3 percent, an increase of 1.5 percentage points from the previous year. This corroborates the earlier finding of the World Youth Report: Youth and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Youth Social Entrepreneurship and 2030 Agenda.

We are mindful of the gender gap in youth unemployment: young women are worse off than young men, exhibiting a much lower employment-to-population ratio (EPR). In 2022, only 27.4 percent of young women globally are projected to be in employment, compared to 40.3 percent of young men.

Of great concern is the situation of those in the informal labor sector as they are the ones who are most severely impacted by Covid 19 and the resultant economic recession.

We note with worry the lack of legal and social protection for women in the informal sector, especially in the most precarious forms, makes them even more vulnerable to violence and even Femicide. The decline in the employment content of growth is a matter of great policy concern. Growth without job creation is a worrying trend in many growing economies. Economic growth alone does not necessarily translate into more and better jobs, especially for the poor, vulnerable, and those at risk of being left behind. Explicitly integrating employment and decent work into economic growth and poverty reduction policies helps to maximize the benefits for people and to ensure that growth is both sustainable and inclusive.

Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth was one of the 5 transformational shifts that Agenda 2030 wanted to bring about. The very formulation of SDG 8 “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” recognizes that economic growth will be inclusive only if it creates jobs and decent work. Because of the strong link between growth, employment, and poverty reduction activities in support of SDG 8 will also support the achievement of SDG 1 (poverty) and 10 (equality). The targets associated with SDG 8 cover a wide range of aspects linked to the Decent Work Agenda, such as productivity (8.2), entrepreneurship (8.3), green jobs (8.4), job

creation (8.5), youth employment (8.6), child and forced labour (8.7), OSH (8.8), LED (8.9) and access to finance (8.10).

We are in total agreement with the UN Policy Brief in The World of Work and Covid 19 that create decent and productive jobs for a green, inclusive, and resilient recovery and future of work. Estimates suggest that the Green, Digital, and Care Economy has the greatest potential to create these urgently required job opportunities. Undertaking the green, digital, and care measures together as part of a big investment push would raise the global gross domestic product by 4.2 percent and create an additional 139 million jobs for workers of all ages worldwide, of which 32 million would be accounted for by young people.

Since conflict and disaster have severe implications for the world of work, programs that focus on Peace and Resilience are another source of employment generation, especially for young women and men.

The COVID-19 crisis also serves as a reminder of the crucial need to make the transition from the informal to the formal economy a priority area in national policies. Economic recovery, while necessary, will not by itself reduce informality; suitable public policies are also essential. ILO guidance in this regard in its Policy Brief: The World of Work and COVID-19 needs to be taken seriously.

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.

To realize this vision Salesians of Don Bosco has set up a network of Vocational and Technical Education and Training in the continents of Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Since the onset of Covid 19, it has invested \$9,345,147.00 to train youth in Green, Digital, Care, Agriculture, and other traditional trades.

In Europe 60,645 youth are in training currently. According to the assessment done in 2021 on all the European Vocational Education and Training Centers in which 5032 students were interviewed, Salesian students’ formative success in Europe is 88.5%: after one year from their qualification/ diploma, 34,46% of qualified students have a stable occupation/job, the 54% are continuing their studies towards a diploma or a higher Vocational Education Training path, while only the 7,3% is still unemployed.

Investing \$2,334,447.00 in Green Economy it has trained 1250 youth in India, in collaboration with the government and Corporate Social Responsibility partnerships, and 446 youth in Burundi and Nigeria with the support of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany).

Investment in Digital Economy amounted to \$1,092,003 and this investment saw 5952 youth trained for digital and financial services.

Care Economy saw an investment of \$1,956,776 which went to train 6557 youth in the hospitality and nursing sector in India and Argentina. An investment of \$758,760 was spent on training 1717 youth in Argentina, Tanzania, and India.

Traditional industries saw an investment of \$3,203,162 which was utilized to streamline the training of 51,599 youth across 34 countries in Africa and India. This concerted effort and investment resulted in 50,773 young people finding decent work.

Recommendations

Ensure greater investments to promote lifelong learning and re-skilling to address a mismatch between the demand and supply of skills in labor.

Develop and reform legislations and policies to facilitate the transition from informal labor to promote the formal economy's growth.

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, universal, comprehensive, and sustainable social protection systems, including the assurance of social protection floors.

Ratify and implement International Labour Organisation C190 and R206, aimed at eradicating violence and harassment in the workplace.

Invest in Green, Blue, digital, care, and agriculture economies as they provide the greatest source of job creation.

Provide training and support for young people in partnerships with private sector industries to promote sustainable entrepreneurship among them and for gainful employment in emerging economies.

Remove legal and regulatory barriers that prevent young people to register and set up businesses, making it easier for young entrepreneurs to access essential financial services.

Develop Private sector policies with a specific focus on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises and public-private partnerships.

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.

Co-sponsoring Organizations

Carmelite NGO, Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, Congregation of the Mission, Edmund Rice International, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary– Loreto Generalate, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc. Soroptimist International, UNANIMA International, Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo.