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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Written statement* submitted by Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 November 2001]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).
Social-Economic Report According to the Information provided by the Home Permanent Poll (HPP) on may 2001.

When the speculations over the announcement of the poll's results on may of this year was about to be postponed until august, the figures were known on july the 20th, in which it is noticed an increase in the unemployment rate from 15.4 % registered in may last year to 16.4 % registered this year.

According to official versions, the unemployment number has increased in 206.000 people, reaching a record of 2.283.000 unemployed, a number which was never registered before, not even during the elevated unemployment rate reached on may 1995 (18,4 %), after the Tequila Crisis.

Moreover, we estimate that there are 2.074.000 sub-employed people, which means that they work less than 35 hours a week. For these reason we estimate that there are 4.357.000 people with employment's problems, which represents the 31.3 % of the Economically Active Population (EAP). We should have in mind that this is just the top of the iceberg and even among those who, according to the HPP, are considered full employees, there is a grate number of inequalities: non registered employment, over occupation (more than 45 work hours per week) without remuneration, salaries reduction, late salaries, bad security conditions, over qualification (which means that the employees have a higher level of education than the one required for the job).

| Measurements | Rate | Rate | Number of People |
|---|--------|--------|------------------|
| Unemployed | 15.4 % | 16,4 % | 2.283.000 |
| Sub-employed | 14.5 % | 14,9 % | 2.074.000 |
| Total of people with employment's problem | | | 4.357.000 |

The activity rate (relation between the Economically Active Population -EAP- and the total of the population) has had a small increase, passing from the 42.4% to 42.8 % between may 2000 and may 2001. There has been an increase of 433.718 people in the economically active population, the 47.5% of them passed to the unemployment condition, the 27.3 % to the sub-employment, and only the 25.2% of the people who were part of the EAP obtained a full occupation (more than 35 hours a week). Though the full occupation is increasing in 3.2%, the sub-occupation and the unemployment are growing in a greater number, 17.3 % and 22%, respectively.

This shows how the economic system creates employment but in a very slow rhythm, and on a higher percentage it creates precarious jobs.

Anyhow it's important to take notice that there are important differences between the urban agglomerations in our country, and that the indicator's behavior are tied to the evolution of Gran Buenos Aires (City of Buenos Aires City and Buenos Aires suburbs) since this urban agglomeration represents the 33.4% of the urban population of the country and the 37.8% of the economically active population. That's why it is noticed a grate regional disparity of the unemployment rate, with the Gran Catamarca's agglomeration on top of the list with 22.3% and the Rio Gallegos' agglomeration on the button of the list with only 2.1%.

Differences between the urban agglomerations with the highest unemployment rates:

| Urban Agglomerations | Unemployment Rate |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | % |
| Gran Catamarca | 22.3 % |
| Gran Rosario | 20.2 % |
| Mar del Plata | 19 % |
| Partidos del Conurbano | 18.7 % |
| San Salvador de Jujuy | 18.6 % |
| Concordia | 18.5 % |
| Gran San Miguel de Tucumán | 17.4 % |
| Salta | 16.1 % |
| Gran La Plata | 16.8 % |
| Bahía Blanca | 16.7 % |
| Corrientes | 16.5 % |
| Santa Fe | 16.5 % |

On the other hand, while Gran Buenos Aires(17.2%) rates higher than the average, the Urban Interior Total (15.4%) is below the average. That's because under these denomination we find different region's realities, which leave us far from reality when we take it as a totality. Precisely, the extremes that we mentioned before (Gran Catamarca and Río Gallegos) are located under this very denomination.

The urban agglomerations that would be found in better conditions are, aside from Río Gallegos, Posadas (4.1%), San Luis and El Chorrillo (10.1%), Ushuaia and Rio Grande (10.6%) and the Gran Mendoza (10.7%).

But, aside from observing the differences between the last unemployment rate's report, it's necessary to appreciate which was the behavior of the different urban agglomerations by studding more specifically each behavior and relating them with other employment market's indicators, to reach a conclusion about its causes. On one side, we can notice how urban agglomerations evolved on the employment's market, using the Ministry of Economics' argument, which is based on the variation of the activity's and the unemployment's rates.

Poverty and Indigence in Gran Buenos Aires.

The gap between the richer 10% of the population and the poorer 10% deepened during De la Rúa's Administration, continuing with the enlargement registered during Menem's Administration.

The distance between both layers shows the most regressive income's distribution registered on the last quarter of the century. This is the reason why the enlargement of poverty to nearly 33% of Gran Buenos Aires inhabitants implies the dropped down of the middle-low layers.

Between may 2000 and the same month in 2001, the number of people below the poverty line passed from 29.7 % to 32.7 % of the population, which means an increase of 10.1%. Since may 1994, when the lowest percentage of poverty was registered, this indicator has doubled in the main urban agglomeration of the country. These percentages applied to the studied population mean that, on may 2001, a group of

838.000 homes, which includes 3.959.000 inhabitants, were living below the poverty line. On the other hand, as it is noticed in the graphic, the proportion of people suffering this social illness seems to increase more than the number of homes, which shows an enlargement of the families' internal composition.

The poverty is measured with the "poverty line" method, which establishes a group of nourishing and non nourishing necessities that are considered essential (beginning from the total homes' incomes, when they have the capacity to satisfy their needs by buying goods and services).

In order to calculate the essential needs for a family, a Total Basic Basket is established. For an adult equivalent, this basket cost \$154.3, in April 2001. As the nourishing requirements are different according to the age, sex and people's activities, it is necessary to adequate it so that it reveals each person's characteristics in relation to this variables, that's why adult men between 30 to 59 years old, with moderate activities, are taken as a reference. For example: the necessities of a 7 to 9 year old child are equivalent to 0.72 of an adult's necessities, there for they are equivalent to U\$S 111. The necessities of a man from 30 to 59 years are equivalent to 1, the ones of a woman from 30 to 59 years old are equivalent to 0.74, and so on. There by, each group of age and sex (since 10 years old) has an equivalent, with which is estimated the total of the corresponding home.

On the other side, we notice that the proportion of people below the poverty line in Gran Buenos Aires (39.4% and 10.9% respectively) almost quadruplicates the one registered in the City of Buenos Aires. Also we noticed important differences between the first and the second stripe of Gran Buenos Aires (GBA). On the first one, GBA1 (Avellaneda, Gral San Martin, Lomas de Zamora, Moron, Quilmes, San Isidro, Tres de Febrero and Vicente Lopez) the proportion of people reached by poverty rises to 27.9%, while in the second one, GBA2 (Almirante Brown, Berasategui, Esteban Echeverría, Gral. Sarmiento, Florencio Varela, La Matanza, Merlo, Moreno, San Fernando and Tigre) poverty reaches to almost half of the population, rising to 48.9%.

On the other side, we have the "indigence line" which is a concept that tries to establish whether homes' incomes are able to purchase a nourish basket that allows the family to satisfy the basic necessities of energy and protein. On this case, we use a basic nourish basket of minimum cost, which is established by the population's consumption habits. The price of this basket for an equivalent adult was \$63.24, in April 2001.

In Gran Buenos Aires, the proportion of homes below the indigence line rose from 5.3% to 7.4% between may 2000 and the same month in 2001 while the population passed from 7.5% to 10.3%, which means that the proportion of indigent homes increased in 39.6% while the population increased in 37.3%, during this year.

Comparing to may 1994, the indigent homes almost tripled while the population has multiplied more than three times. This numbers show that the crisis affected more aggressively the most unprotected layers, doubling the number of poor people and tripling the number of indigents. There are 264.000 homes in indigence situation, which means that 1247.000 inhabitants can't satisfy their basic necessities of subsistence. This gets even worst if we study those numbers separately on each region.

While in the City of Buenos Aires, the population underneath this line reaches the 1.7% in the suburbs of Gran Buenos Aires it reaches the 13%. Besides, in the first stripe of Gran Buenos Aires this number drops down to 8.9%, reaching in the second stripe the 16.4% of the population.

If we look at this numbers, it could be clearly understood why the excluded and unemployed people keep fighting to obtain an "Employment Plan" (Plan Trabajar), which distributes, around U\$S 120 to U\$S 160 per habitant.

September 2001