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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 Modern Advocacy Humanitarian Social and Rehabilitation Association, 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 Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### Facing Post COVID-19 Impacts through Social Security, Social Cohesion and Global Peace Commitments

#### Introduction

Achieving social security is a phenomenon that is interrelated and interdependent with economic rights and opportunities for income generation at individual levels. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 16 December 1966, indicates that, the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want, is only obtained when most appropriate conditions for everyone, are created for realizing and enjoying his/her economic, social and cultural rights.<sup>1</sup> As a fundamental human right, social security becomes a potent tool to fight against discrimination and poverty, and promote social inclusion. It is the pivotal instrument for mitigating societal class divides and a key conception for protecting and empowering the most vulnerable and marginalized persons in the society. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Geneva highlights key elements on the right to social security in all situations.<sup>2</sup> These include: availability of effective social security systems within local and national laws and policies; sustainable adequacy and sufficiency of benefits for life sustenance, assistance and protection measures; affordability to social security guarantee mechanisms that do not infringe on other duly instituted and protected human rights; and accessibility for all, especially disadvantaged and marginalized groups. In summary, the importance of social security may be considered commensurable to the existential ethics of human rights and thereby, a key dimension for investigations towards solutions that should, ascertain global insecurities, adjust failed social cohesion systems, and improve global peace building efforts. However, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has severely stalled and regressed several efforts realized so far.

#### COVID-19 Impacts on Social Security Systems

Global assessments have indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reversed accrued human development gains, and has led to the impoverishment of hundreds of millions.<sup>3</sup> Such levels of poverty as a result of the pandemic, have compounded the impacts of widening inequalities whereas, attention earlier focused on long-term humanity preservation issues such as climate change and other social security measures for poverty reduction and conflict mitigation, have been shifted. There are now some fears that if no additional national and international policy measures are imposed, the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals will not be achieved, and the structural transformation processes necessary in developing and emerging countries may be thwarted.<sup>4</sup>

In arable localities, especially within rural communities, devastating consequences of the pandemic have drastically diminished the industrialization of local agricultural incentives, by pushing many farmers into more subsistence oriented

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<sup>1</sup> Preamble of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 16 December 1966.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/rightsocialsecurity/pages/socialsecurity.aspx>. Accessed: October 19, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank Blogs. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/updated-estimates-impact-covid-19-global-poverty-turning-corner-pandemic-2021>, Accessed: October 19, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Virtual Expert Group Meeting on “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all...” held from 29–30 July and 2–3 August 2021.

cultivation activities, due to the disruption of markets. Determinants of social wellbeing including health, education, and other economic and leisure activities, especially the rich touristic returns within poor localities, have been halted or severely backslidden. Among other issues, the pandemic have increased societal inequalities wherein, some (highly skilled) have increased earnings meanwhile others within low-skilled employment sectors have been negatively affected. Most workers in the informal sectors not covered by social protection systems, such as social insurance mechanisms, have been among the hardest hit. Children and other youths are also counted among the sufferers in terms of loss of education, disruptions in routine immunization, malnutrition, loss of parents and caregivers, and negative impacts on their mental health.<sup>5</sup> Women and girls as well, have suffered extreme victimization as a result of gender-based domestic violence, due to limited social protection measures during lock-down curfews. The above mentioned and more, are responsible for building global insecurities that challenge all sustainable development prospects.

### **Global Insecurities and Failed Social Cohesion Assessments**

The leading cause of global insecurities is as a result of political and social polarization, built on economic disparities and populism, competition for natural resources and environmental degradation, fragmented non-State armed actors and the absence of political solutions to evolving conflicts.<sup>6</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic, though it has taught the world several lessons for unity in action towards achieving human survival goals, has as well, revamped inequalities in several socioeconomic dimensions. Such socioeconomic disparities are steeping the social strata divide that exist, especially with regards to skilled and unskilled workers, political and apolitical personalities, gender interactivity, and other human development prospects. The human socio-interactive spirit through direct physical meetings for enhancing mutual trust has been limited by digital interactions, which are new communication methodologies that still require time for proper capacity building to general adaptation. However, the pandemic has superimposed the use of such technological social cohesion schemes in an unprepared world, thus, causing further inequalities between those with the capacities of usage and those without.

### **Rapid Technological Advancement Needs, Further Deeping Social Security Inequalities**

The pandemic introduced new patterns of life styles into the human family. It has aggravated the unresolved tensions between people and technology, between people and the planet, and between the capable and the incapable, thereby, shaping-in a new generation of inequalities pertaining to enhanced capacities, harnessed through the new necessities of the 21st century.<sup>7</sup> Disparities between technologically advanced and lesser advanced societies, and within class divided communities, is therefore a major threat in leaving many further behind according to the human development context measures. Such situations may lead the majority of the incapable or lesser advanced people, to resort to alternative coping strategies that may significantly increase their vulnerabilities and limit their future prospects for exiting poverty. For example, many may engage in drawing on savings, reducing food consumption, shifting from nutritional foods to basic staple foods, or selling their assets, and more.

Initial efforts for the digitalisation of social protection measures at addressing the pandemic have not been satisfactory due to the incapacities of most countries and

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/reports/averting-lost-generation-covid19-world-childrens-day-2020-brief>, Accessed: October 19, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/org1681.doc.htm>, Accessed: October 19, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> UNDP 2019 Human Development Report.

communities, to establish digitized self-registration platforms for registering on social protection programs. However, even for those countries that had the capacities to do so, the process was unequal since majority, especially the poor, could not reach the platforms due to lack of internet access and the digital know-how means.

### **A Way Forward: Global Commitments for Peace as an Influence drive to Socio-political Change**

The dangers surrounding the impacts from current assessments and evaluations on evolved social inequalities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic should not be ignored. The social strata divide at the post-pandemic period needs diverse methodological and strategic approaches for fostering social inclusion and cohesion, in an upcoming world that may face steep inequalities. Some measures should include:

- (1) Psychological preparations of individual mindsets and institutional frameworks that prioritise peace building and soft humanitarian values. For example, the Global Peace Commitment Initiative.<sup>8</sup>
- (2) Policy and actions prioritisation for inclusiveness in advanced capacity building and sharing, for digital technologies and other inclusive sustainable development prospects. For example, leveraging digital sponsorship which in turn leads to entrepreneurship, job creation and poverty reduction.
- (3) Prevent the disintegration of the middle class societal strata through pragmatic norms and social cohesive interactions between the upper and lower strata, such that, universal social protection systems can reach everyone, including most vulnerable women, children, disabled, indigenous peoples, working poor, and other marginalized populations.

### **Conclusion**

COVID-19 challenges have taught humans a great lesson on the irrefutable social protection and social cohesion needs overly overlooked for a long time. The quest for economic and political power over values of human survival has been very devastating for several decades today, and such has made us, further overlook our own very commitments and decisions to protect life and human dignity, duly enshrined within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We have learned our lessons, we have understood that power without dignity and mutual respect is vain, and we have failed to protect our own. Hence, we must recommit to build our mind frames towards developing and sustaining prioritised social cohesive values that are most relevant in fighting dangerous viruses, diseases and other phenomena liable to break apart our humanity bonding.

#Spirit of Social Bonding: We Commit for Peace! Build Resilient Sustainable  
Livelihoods! End Poverty and Hunger!

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<sup>8</sup> Initiative by NGO MAHSRA, for peacemaking commitments at all levels.