



# 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: 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 the World Youth Alliance, 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

The World Youth Alliance is a global coalition of young people dedicated to promoting the dignity of the human person in policy and culture and committed to building solidarity between young people of developing and developed countries.

All human beings are equal in dignity and therefore deserve respect, opportunities, and the freedom to use their abilities and talents. At the World Youth Alliance, we believe that when people understand human dignity – the intrinsic and equal value of every human being – they strive to create conditions that include everyone and enable all to thrive. Therefore, human dignity must be at the foundation of our efforts. This human dignity-centered approach is reflected in the well-established principle that development must be person-centered. It is the intrinsic worth of the human person that provides the basis to create policies and laws that establish conditions under which human beings can flourish. Therefore, we must work together in solidarity to include and respect every human being in our efforts to eradicate inequality, achieve sustainable development, particularly through the creation of full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The World Youth Alliance recognizes access to proper and quality education as a prerequisite to full and productive employment and accessibility to decent work for all. The post-pandemic recovery has revealed increasing learning divides among children especially in developing and underdeveloped countries. The learning poverty rate (which measures the share of children who cannot read a simple text with comprehension by age 10) has increased due to pandemic-induced closures of schools at irregular intervals. UNICEF's *The State of Global Learning Poverty* suggests that the global learning poverty rate has surged to 70% in low- and middle-income countries due to the impact of the pandemic. Even before COVID-19, nearly 6 out of every 10 ten-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries suffered from learning poverty. Universal foundational skills are essential to the flourishing of individuals and societies, this widespread learning poverty threatens to undermine the future of today's children and the economic prospects of their countries. The very high levels of learning poverty; before COVID-19 and now, show the current failure to meet children's right to education.

The gap caused by the pandemic in children's education may further exacerbate inequalities in having a future of full and productive employment. The McKinsey Global Institute in its report titled *The Future of work after COVID-19* analyzed that the pandemic has established a scenario of labour demand shifting from low-skilled low-income jobs to higher skills and higher pay jobs. Shifting jobs in the low-pay spectrum has become difficult with workers requiring additional skills. Such a scenario makes the task of envisioning equality in employment opportunities and decent work in the near future difficult owing to steep inequalities in the education sector. Today's children are tomorrow's workforce and they are not prepared.

The World Youth Alliance has a curriculum that can be incorporated in school and after-school programs to begin to heal the roots of this learning poverty. Our Human Dignity Curriculum promotes respect, responsible behavior, and equality between men and women. It teaches children that every human being has dignity and should therefore be respected. The program is culturally sensitive and encourages parental involvement. We have found that students who understand human dignity are not only prepared to make responsible personal decisions, but they contribute to their communities and treat their friends, families, peer groups, and communities with respect. The Human Dignity Curriculum helps children in understanding their inherent dignity and such insight propels them to aim and stand for equal opportunities for all, for example by initiating action to eliminate inequalities.

It acts as a prominent primary pillar to quality education beginning at a young age by introducing to children the importance of their self-worth, their capacity to choose the good, perseverance in adversity, and respect for their own dignity and the dignity of others. It is this basic understanding which affects learning, relationships with classmates, future family life and work performance. The Human Dignity Curriculum stimulates the mind, strengthens the will, and pulls at the heart to motivate children to be agents of change for good in the world. Just as sustainable development goal 4 is essential to achieve sustainable development goal 8 and 11, human dignity education is the basis for successfully implementing sustainable development goal 4.

Temporary social protection measures to remedy educational inequalities may not suffice. It is vital to use established best practices, like making use of the Human Dignity Curriculum, to achieve enhanced educational outcomes. The World Youth Alliance recognizes the importance of promoting affordable and equitable access to basic services, in particular quality formal and non-formal education, at all levels, including programmes that promote equality and inclusion through the affirmation of the fundamental dignity of the human person as a prelude and requirement to accelerated recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The World Youth Alliance urges the Commission to promote quality education about human dignity as it is the crux of the formation of the person. It is a person who has studied under the programs like the Human Dignity Curriculum who will be able to make the most out of employment opportunities and work to transform their communities, thus accelerating the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and achieving the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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