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: “Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication”

Statement submitted by the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists and Kallipatira, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.
Statement

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents our collective dedication to building a fairer and more sustainable world. A core objective is the complete elimination of poverty in all its forms. Achieving this ambitious goal requires a deep understanding of the intricate links between social development, social justice, and the effective implementation of social policies. At the heart of a just and equitable society lies social justice, ensuring equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for everyone, irrespective of race, gender, age, disability, or socioeconomic status. Attaining social justice demands challenging discrimination, bias, and inequality, while actively dismantling systemic barriers hindering human progress.

The fight against poverty, a complex global challenge, is intricately linked with our pursuit of social development and social justice. Poverty goes beyond inadequate income, encompassing limited access to education, healthcare, housing, and social services. Addressing these interconnected issues demands holistic and integrated solutions.

To expedite the 2030 Agenda's implementation and fulfill our commitment to poverty eradication, we must leverage the potential of social policies. These policies, ranging from targeted social protection initiatives to investments in education, healthcare, and employment, translate our vision into action. They serve as powerful tools for poverty reduction and the promotion of social justice, redistributing wealth, providing a safety net, and dismantling structural barriers. However, it's essential to acknowledge that designing and implementing social policies require a nuanced understanding of each community's unique contexts, needs, and challenges. There's no one-size-fits-all solution; local ownership and participation are crucial for their effectiveness and sustainability.

In our pursuit of social development and social justice, investing in education is vital. Quality education, a fundamental human right, acts as a catalyst in breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality. It equips individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead productive lives, participate in the job market, and contribute to their communities' development. Governments should ensure that every child, irrespective of their circumstances, has access to quality education. This may involve expanding access to early childhood education, eliminating school fees, and providing transportation support for children in remote areas. Also, continuous investment in teachers' professional development ensures that students receive high-quality education. Well-trained educators are crucial for fostering inclusive classrooms and promoting social justice. Especially in lower income countries, the international community should support the local education systems through funding and investments on infrastructure.

Additionally, healthcare is a fundamental aspect of social policies. Access to affordable and quality healthcare prevents impoverishment due to illness and ensures the overall well-being of individuals and families. Thus, policies that guarantee access to healthcare services for all, regardless of income or socio-economic status, must be implemented. Universal healthcare coverage can significantly reduce medical expenses and protect families from financial hardship due to health issues. Moreover, preventive healthcare measures – such as vaccination programs, regular check-ups, and health education – must be prioritized, to reduce the burden of diseases and improve overall well-being. Targeted policies are needed to reduce healthcare disparities among different demographic groups, including minorities and marginalized communities.

Social protection programs play a vital role in our efforts to eradicate poverty and enhance social development. They provide a safety net for those facing economic
hardships, guaranteeing access to basic necessities like food, shelter, and healthcare. The introduction of social assistance programs, including cash transfers, food support, and housing subsidies for vulnerable populations, can help prevent extreme poverty and provide a safety net for those in need.

Investing in decent work and employment opportunities is another essential component of social policies. By creating jobs and advocating for fair labor practices, we empower individuals to lift themselves out of poverty and contribute to their societies' overall progress. The international community should support governments on developing policies that foster job creation and economic opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged groups. This can include job training programs, support for small businesses, and incentives for companies to hire from marginalized communities. At the same time, labor laws should be implemented and strengthened to ensure fair wages, safe working conditions, and job security for all workers. This is crucial for reducing income inequality and promoting social justice.

Poverty eradication is our shared responsibility. To realize this vision, unwavering commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals is imperative. Recognizing the interdependence of social development, social justice, and social policies is key to driving progress. Addressing the unique needs of our communities and ensuring no one is left behind are essential steps toward building a more equitable and sustainable world, where the eradication of poverty becomes not just a goal but a reality.

The Hellenic Association of Political Scientists and Kallipatira are grateful for having had the opportunity to express their views on the topic of the 62nd Session of the Commission on Social Development.