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 World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.
Statement

This statement has been drafted by the Permanent Commission for the Development of SMEs of the World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises, whose Members are: Prof. James Omps (USA) as Chairperson, Dr. Joginder Singh Juneja (India) and Prof. Rodrigo Varela (Colombia) as Vice Chairpersons, Mr. Daniel Musiitwa Ssubi (Uganda), Mr. Giorgio Battistini (San Marino), Mr. Giancarlo Grasso (Italy), Mr. Denis Hughey (USA), Mr. Alan Lund (USA), Prof. Mohamed Tajudin Alias (Malesya), with the support of the other Representatives of the World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises and under the guidance of President Ms. Barbara Terenzi, the Board of Directors and the Headquarters.

The World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises pursues the aim of representing and supporting the interests of SMEs and Crafts with particular attention to countries with less developed economies and to women and youth entrepreneurship.

It is well known the relevance and the role that SMEs plays in terms of total employment. They are and they will continue to be the largest economic sector, nationally and globally, the light blood of the world economy and the main tool to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations.

Even though their role affects all the 17 Development Goals, there are some of them that have more direct connections within the SMEs: No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good health and Well-being, Quality education, Gender equality, Decent work and economic growth, Industry, innovation, and infrastructure, Reduce inequalities, Responsible consumption, and production.

The world needs more and better entrepreneurs and SMEs managers to have more and better enterprises that will be able to generate more value to the economy, more decent works to the communities and from there contribute to solve the poverty problems: health, hunger, education, inequalities, etc.

The entrepreneurial culture requires several actions which could be classified in three groups: Education, Governmental and business.

In the educational sector:
• Development and implementation of the entrepreneurial education, in all levels of the educational system;
• Creation of research units to identify the needs that every country has in the implementation of the entrepreneurial activities;
• Development of programs specific oriented to form the new entrepreneurs, the new entrepreneurship’s professors, the new entrepreneurs’ consultants
• Support the development of the academic material based in the need of every country
• Development of entrepreneurship programs specially oriented and suited to the underrepresented groups
• Integrate the business sector and the government with the educational sector to identify the best policies and programs that should be implemented in order to have an entrepreneurial environment.

In the government sector:
• Formulate and implement national program to develop entrepreneurship;
• Create and finance support units that could provide counselling, mentoring, coaching and assistance to the entrepreneurs in all the stages of the enterprise development: conception, birth, survival, growth, decline and death;

• Generate policies oriented to facilitate the birth and the development of new enterprises: tax laws, procedure to formalize, seed capital, warranties, labour regulations, export promotion, etc.;

• Establish a national system of entrepreneurial information that provide orientations to the entrepreneurs in all the elements required for the establishment and development of the enterprises in the different sectors;

• Stimulate the development of enterprises in new sectors that are just starting to develop in the country, such as: technology, cultural, social, sports, health, tourism;

• Stimulate the development of new enterprises among underrepresented groups: women, young, senior, low income, displaced, etc.;

• Support the creation and operation of incubators, accelerators, and support units

• Develop special programs that allow new enterprises and SME’s to be part of the government purchasing processes;

• Facilitate the processes to register intellectual developments: patents, business models, etc.).

In the business sector:

• Generate educational campaigns that show to the community the positive role of entrepreneurs and enterprises, and to develop an entrepreneurial culture;

• Develop procedures to present to the community the best entrepreneurs in the different sectors and regions;

• Develop support programs to finance the best entrepreneurial initiatives that the university students had developed;

• Connect experience entrepreneurs with new entrepreneurs to help them in the development of their enterprise;

• Develop Angels clubs among the successful entrepreneurs to provide financial and counselling support to new entrepreneurs;

• Promote, with the financial sector, new financial programs specially oriented to the new entrepreneurs;

• Interact with the government to formulate new programs and initiatives that will support the development of the new enterprises;

• Create the programs like Entrepreneurs in residence, that allows the presence of entrepreneurs in the educational institutions to share all their knowledge and experiences.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SMEs

Social Justice is about the impact on SMEs.

Social development and social justice are essential for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Social policies play a critical role by:

* Promoting inclusive economic growth and development: Social policies can help to create a more inclusive economy by providing equal opportunities for all. This can be done through policies such as social safety nets, investments in
education and skills development, and the promotion of decent work and employment.

* Reducing inequality and poverty: social policies can help to reduce inequality and poverty by providing targeted support to the most vulnerable groups in society. This can be done through policies such as social safety nets, investments in basic social services, and the promotion of social dialogue and participation.

* Promoting social justice and human rights: Social policies can help to promote social justice and human rights by ensuring that everyone has access to essential goods and services, such as education, healthcare, and housing. They can also help to promote equality and non-discrimination.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND FEMALE SMEs

Social justice has to do with women. Women Entrepreneurs always suffer more than men in economic uncertainty and more so depending on the country’s overall economic state.

Social justice for women will never arrive unless they are supported by their country’s system that transforms the cultural norms to elevates the value of women generally, both in business and in the familiar status.

The level of social justice is often a reflection of the condition of women, which has to do with their freedom and empowerment. Throughout the world, women’s progress is made possible through finance and education. Digitalization is allowing them to grow and become more independent and freer. Much land is available in Africa for cultivation to fight poverty and hanger.

Recently, female entrepreneurship has increased in some areas of the world. Through small businesses and female SMEs, we can aim for an economic development which could also guarantee social justice. To this end, it is necessary to create a favorable environment for the small business and its development.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SMEs FINANCING

An increasingly important aspect is that more and faster funding (both loans and investments) for SMEs (including start-ups founded and run by young entrepreneurs) with better accessibility and lower costs is very much needed, particularly in the current high-interest-rates period.

This is a critical area in which SMEs should and can get more help from those financial institutions (including banks, sovereign funds, private equity funds and venture capital firms) that subscribe to sustainability and inclusiveness principles. This is actually also part of their ESG and corporate social responsibility (CSR) work. If done right, it is not just a “do good” but also a proper bankable or investable “do well” business for such financial institutions.

Government policy incentives should be strengthened to promote and facilitate more and faster allocation of financial institutions’ resources to provide more and faster funding solutions for SMEs.

In conclusion, the World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises is ready to work with all the Development Partners to meet the aspirations of the communities across the globe and looks forward to the results of the Deliberations of this 62nd United Nations Commission for Social Development.