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 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.

* 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 foster social development and social justice through social policies.

Education is at the center of solutions that accelerates the eradication of poverty. General education empowers children with the ability to enhance their quality of life and their ability to engage in constructive critical analysis to navigate life positively. Education and eradication of poverty are inextricably linked. When children at all ages are equipped with knowledge and the ability to think critically, they are more capable of creating fulfilling careers for themselves when they are young adults and be able to contribute to their community and provide for themselves and their families. World Youth Alliance’s work cherishes the importance of education, and it implements programs and curricula that are at the core of educating girls and boys on their intrinsic human dignity and the power they have to exercise freedom of excellence. Children’s ability to learn about their value and their capacity to contribute to societies and their own wellbeing helps to build a solid foundation for the growth and prospering of communities and economies.

The World Youth Alliance recognizes education as a vital tool in fostering social development which is affirmed in the Draft Resolution III from the fifty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development, paragraph 10, that states that “education about human dignity” must be available to all. Education requires an authentic understanding of the human person and must seek to foster solidarity and respect for oneself and others. Parents bear the primary responsibility for educating their children and the State should support them in fulfilling this role by establishing an appropriate social framework in which parents can direct their children to excellence and virtue through education.

The World Youth Alliance developed a curriculum to promote respect, responsible behavior, and equality between men and women, meeting the aforementioned call for “education about human dignity”. The Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC) teaches children that every human being has dignity and should therefore be respected. The program is culturally sensitive and encourages parental involvement. Students who understand human dignity are not only prepared to make responsible personal decisions, but they also contribute to their communities and treat their friends, families, peer groups, and communities with respect. The Human Dignity Curriculum is founded on a person-centered development that teaches students on human dignity and how this intrinsic value propels growth and development.

The World Youth Alliance also believes a right to the highest attainable standard of health is critical for person-centered sustainable development efforts. Participation in the social and professional realms is impacted by an individual’s health. Poor health
can hinder education, make it more difficult to achieve professional success and negatively impact one’s quality of life in the community. Healthcare and education are the most important prerequisites that are needed in order to lift people out of poverty. It is vital to recognize that non-government organizations such as World Youth Alliance can play an important role in this, through developing and offering educational programs, like the HDC to communities all over the world.

The investment into human capital, which represents skills, insights, and capabilities, is fundamental for both social and personal development. The World Youth Alliance contributes to this development by encouraging and educating its members to recognize their own human dignity, as well as the dignity of others. Youth that is empowered through education and that strives for virtue and excellence, as taught in the HDC, is a strong pillar upon which societal development can be built.

The World Youth Alliance recognizes that human beings are our greatest resource to achieve true social development, and in particular sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and protection of everyone’s human dignity and rights. By grounding our efforts in human dignity and building person-centered policies, we can equip all human beings to be problem-solvers. Thus empowered, everyone can contribute to the development of their communities using their unique capacities and gifts.

We invite the Commission to recognize the actions of organizations such as World Youth Alliance and its young members around the globe. One key resource that we offer is our Human Dignity Curriculum. Educational programs such as this, that are based on the recognition of universal human dignity, serve as a foundation for cultivating various forms of capital, particularly human capital, to promote social development and justice.