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 Paz y Cooperacion, 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

Poverty is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. It is caused by structural or circumstantial factors, and its devastating effects go beyond affecting just individuals, social groups, or populations. Poverty is incompatible with a dignified life and is also an obstacle to the social and economic transformation that gives agency to individuals and their respective communities. The fight against poverty is a “moral responsibility,” in the words of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, which concerns all governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations. In this sense, the promotion of international cooperation programs is a key tool to address the various faces of poverty, which are closely related to the set of Sustainable Development Goals.

Child poverty should receive special attention in the ambitious task of eradicating poverty, with particular attention to the right to compulsory, free, non-discriminatory, and quality education. Together with access to food, water, health care and protection, education is a key element in building the pillars of a decent, fairer, and more caring society. The violation of the right to education perpetuates the cycle of poverty because it limits people’s decision-making, hinders their opportunities to access the labor market, increases the risk of social exclusion and, in short, curtails the expansion of their human potential.

International cooperation programs should promote the construction of equipped, accessible, inclusive, and safe schools, supply educational materials, provide teachers with comprehensive and adequate training, and guarantee the educational continuity of schoolchildren, so that under no circumstances are they forced to interrupt or abandon their primary and secondary education.

The targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasize the need to provide “quality” education, so that both men and women have access to technical and professional training. Specifically, goal 4.7. states that, by 2030, all learners should acquire “the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.”

On the one hand, there is an undeniable need to promote education based on harmonizing economic and social development with sustainability, as this will help to increase opportunities for poverty alleviation in the medium and long term, while ensuring the survival of humanity and the planet.

It is no coincidence, moreover, that raising the awareness of children and young people to the culture of peace and nonviolence is even more crucial, since development achievements in the coming years will not be sustainable for long without a society educated in the values of equity, justice, solidarity, and non-discrimination.