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 VISTA ORGANISATION FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA, 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 eradication is a major concern for the whole humanity. And there is no social justice if an important part of the population of the world still lives in poverty. Therefore, poverty should be eradicated through social justice and social development in order to “leave no one behind” by 2030.

In fact, leaving no one behind while attaining the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 requires, among other, to eradicate poverty. And poverty eradication passes through the elimination of inequalities: inequality between sex, inequality between communities and inequality among countries.

Moreover, poverty affects mainly women, youths, rural areas and developing countries. Social justice requires that development policies should be dedicated to improving the life conditions of these different groups, thus reducing inequalities. Concerning women and youths, bold steps should be taken in order to improve significantly on their empowerment. The debate has been going on for decade, and we can observe that just little improvements have been realised, thus reducing the likelihood to achieve the SDGs 5, 10, and 16 therefore SDG 1 given that those two groups constitute the majority of the population of the world. It is important to keep in mind that not having proper social policies which address youth issues (economic and social) in order to promote peaceful communities will become a serious challenge as they are the one to be recruited by terrorists groups acting in different countries as well as gangs.

By the way, investing more in the employability and entrepreneurship abilities of the youths and women is essential. There is necessity to promote local transformations of primary goods in developing countries in order to create more jobs or income for women and youths. In addition, local transformations will transform rural areas as they are the main providers of the primary goods, so their purchasing power will increase as they will sell more products at a better price. Also, local transformation comes with the development of the tertiary sectors activities like services that can generate more jobs and more income for rural areas as well as for governments. In order to strengthen this approach, the educational system needs to be adjusted. In fact, in the formal education there is a need to make the students acquainted with the professional milieu by including first, internship during a part of the holidays, then doing an alternance programmes where they will learn and know the skills necessary for their future integration in the job markets.

As matter of fact, a decision taken for someone without the person being involved can be against him/her. Therefore, the promotion of social justice requires that women and youths should be sitting at the table of decision makers; And it is important to set some quota for women for instance at the decision level. But we can observe that in many countries, it is not that effective. Governments should deliberate include more women at decision making positions. There is also the need to modify how girls or young women are raised including self-esteem and self confidence in the girls so that they grow up knowing that they can and have to participate in decision making at different levels. More space should also be given to the youth. Instead of creating more youth parliaments and other similar settings, it is better to make them involved in politics and decision making as early as possible. This implies that a focus should be put on building their leadership skills and develops volunteerism spirit quite early. Leadership skills imply instilling some core and crucial values in the youths. This will guide the quality of communities we will build the quality of governance that will govern the countries and the type of countries we will have in the world by 2030.
All things considered, define, and implement more fair-trade policies and practices (SDG 17) are very urgent in fostering social development and social justice. In fact, the actual international trading system promotes inequalities among countries due to some rules which are not favourable to some countries including African countries whose economies are based on agriculture. They should play a bigger role in setting the prices of the goods in the international market. Also, they should be able to support their farmers like other developed countries do. Locally, agricultural products to be promoted should be those that meet the need of the populations. This means that crops to be promoted should not be export oriented but those that can feed the population and the extra only be sold on the foreign market. This will contribute to preserving or achieving food self-sufficiency. And by doing all said, we will accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development thus promoting good health and reducing poverty.