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 Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled, 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

We have passed all most 8 years after community of nations stated the commitment of achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals or 2030 development agenda with the overarching goal of eradicating poverty everywhere in all its forms and manifestations and “no one will be left behind”. The voluntary reviews of various states parties, studies, research, and the baseline data collected by the civil society agencies to implement micro development projects have clearly revealed that we have a long way to go achieve the targets stated in the 2030 development framework. The present situation demands the states parties to enact or evolve or amend or formulate appropriate social policies or statutes which will foster the social development and social justice towards the implementation of development agenda with the overarching goal of eradicating poverty everywhere in all its forms and manifestations.

Progressive and development oriented social policies of the national government at all levels can make significant difference and foster social development and justice to all. These policies or statutes can accelerate the implementation of 2030 development agenda towards achieving the goals stated in the framework. The progressive social policies or statutes will make a balance between welfare and development. Welfare approach is required to promote equity and end oppression and discrimination which a section of people have been facing and caught in the vicious cycle of chronic poverty. Social policies through social welfare measures can bring about equity and eradicate poverty and end hunger.

Social policies and statutes have the potential of ensuring the effective and meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in all the actions and processes towards achieving the sustainable development agenda.

Employment generation across sectors can be one of the strategies to achieve some of the goals stated in the framework. Agriculture is one of the main sectors which will have the potential to generate employment opportunities in rural areas and ensure food security in order to improve nutrition and end hunger. Majority of the countries do not have policies or statutes which are pro-farmers or agrarian sector. There is a demand from this sector to amend statutes and policies in order to convert them to to social policies in favour of farming class, agriculture sector, landless labourers, agriculture labourers, wage labourers from unorganised sector and other stakeholders involved in the sector towards achieving the development agenda. Both men and women who work in the sector should be paid as per the statute and discrimination in wages on the basis of gender should be ended. There should be appropriate and adequate market facilities to the farmers to sell their products without the involvement of mediators.

Government should directly purchase the product by providing them the support price in case fall in the price. All the agricultural inputs such as manure, seeds, fertilizers, environmentally friendly pesticides, and insecticides should be supplied at a very affordable cost with adequate subsidy. Only social policies and statutes can translate these factors on the ground.

The second important sector which has demonstrated potential in generating employment opportunities to different segments of people in the society is industry regardless of type and form of the sector. There are possibilities of intersecting each other in a negative way. We should be careful about the climate and ensure biodiversity. Promotion of industry should not have negative impact on these factors. Only social policies and statutes can ensure generation employment opportunities without exerting negative impact on the environment and ensure livelihoods for all sections of people with adequate wages as stated in the social policy or statute. This
is also same case. Majority of the countries have anti-labour statutes and do not have adequate precautionary measures to protect the interest of labour class and environment. Only amending these statutes and enacting social statutes or policies can bring about significant change in this sector towards achieving the agenda.

Enhancing the investment on social sector through social policies, welfare schemes, programmes, services, relief, subsidies, nominal rate of interest on credit availed for small business ventures, encouraging unemployed youth to undertake startups, provision of social venture capital for youth to earn their livelihoods and end poverty and hunger of self and the family will significantly contribute in achieving the agenda through social policies towards social development and social justice.

It is not that there are no social policies or statutes, there are a number of statutes and policies. The problem is their effective implementation on the ground in letter and spirit. The custodian of these statutes and social policies are not at all accountable to neither public nor monitoring agencies. Social policies can foster social development and social justice only when they are effectively implemented on the ground in letter and spirit with strong and demonstrated political will. Social policies for the name’s sake cannot bring about any significant changes in the present scenario. Progressive implementers are required to translate and transform the progressive social policies towards reality. Effective monitoring system and review of the state’s parties on a regular basis on the progress achieved towards the implementation of development agenda. Social policies and statutes always prioritise the welfare measures than secondary priorities. It is the political will which decides the priorities for a country. Strong social policies and statutes can influence the decision makers and decide priorities in favour of most needy towards eradicating poverty everywhere in all its forms and manifestations.

One of the key sectors in the recent past which has been playing the vital role is corporate sector. A large number of corporate agencies under the mandate of United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) aligned to national statutes under the title Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or Corporate Social Accountability (CSA) have been investing hugely on development especially towards achieving the 2030 development agenda. CSR policy or rules one such example where private sector has been involved in the welfare of the public. This shows that social policies and statutes can influence various sectors and attract their attention towards achieving the goals and implementation of the targets stated in the development framework. They are not only investing on the development sector but also sensitive towards environment and climate change. They have started taking adequate precautionary measures to protect environment and prevent environmental degradation.

The states parties have signed the agreement on development agenda, but it is the first and foremost duty of every stakeholder to contribute to achieving the sustainable development agenda. If that is the case, then only we can achieve the set goals and targets within a period of seven years to a larger extent. Let us join our hands to have a very fair and just social order for all.

Let us dream for a planet where there is no poverty; hunger; healthy lives; education for all; women and girls enjoy equality; water and sanitation for all; sustainable and reliable energy; sustainable economic development; good climate; fair consumption; equality between countries; peace and global solidarity.

Social policies and statutes will really facilitate social development and social justice where every individual enjoy and exercise his/her all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination. That is the aim and dream of the community of nations to agree upon the sustainable development agenda for 2030.