

JOINT STATEMENT TO THE 21st SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

On Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

by International Movement ATD Fourth World, on behalf of ActionAid International; Association Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII; CIVICUS; Dominicans for Justice and Peace; European Disability Forum, on behalf of the International Disability Alliance; Franciscans International; International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE); International Council of Jurists; International Council of Women; International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation; Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Right to Education Project; Social Watch; Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries; all of which enjoy consultative status with ECOSOC, and the Community Law Centre, South Africa; The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, USA; and the Free Trade Union Development Center, Sri Lanka

Madame President,

I am making this statement on behalf of 18 NGOs.

Extreme poverty cannot be reduced to a lack of income, food, education, or housing. It is also all too often associated with discrimination, exploitation, humiliation, and contempt. In both rich and poor countries, people living in extreme poverty face a whole range of violations of their rights: they have little access to any services; they have little chance of living up to their potential; their families are often torn apart; they are subjected to harassment and intimidation; and often – especially in more affluent countries – they are actually blamed for their poverty. They are thus caught in a vicious cycle of powerlessness and exclusion from which few can escape without targeted support.

The final version of the draft guiding principles submitted by the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights is an extremely important document, for it sets out very clearly and succinctly the actions that need to be taken to address the many ways in which the rights of people living in extreme poverty are violated in various country situations. Over the last 10 years, many consultations have been held on the guiding principles, and therefore this final text summarizes the experiences of all stakeholders – governments, human rights experts, and civil society, including people with direct experience of extreme poverty. This is what makes these guidelines practical and concrete, for they are based on reality. As NGOs, we are confident they reflect the experiences of people who are trapped in poverty. They can therefore help ensure that anti-poverty strategies are effective, and most importantly, empower people to lift themselves out

of poverty.

We are convinced that this document will also provide important input into the formulation of a new and more effective post-2015 development agenda, that will hopefully recognize the importance of advancing the full realization of all human rights in order to address the current crises facing the international community. For in addition to spelling out the steps that need to be taken by national governments to ensure that key rights are respected for all of their citizens, it also spells out very clearly in Section VI the obligations of international assistance and cooperation – obligations that, if met, will help to build a more stable and prosperous world for everyone.

We therefore highly commend the Special Rapporteur for her report. It is time that this work, which began in 2001, be finalized and that the guiding principles be adopted by the Council.

Thank you.