

ECOSOC Resolution 2003/15

Agreed conclusions on national and international cooperation for social development

The Economic and Social Council

Endorses the following agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission for Social Development with respect to its priority theme at its forty-first session:

1. The Commission stresses that national and international cooperation for social development should aim at solidarity, equality within and among countries, social justice, good governance at all levels, tolerance and full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. The Commission recognizes that globalization and interdependence are opening new opportunities through trade, investment and capital flows and advances in technology, including information technology, for the growth of the world economy and the development and improvement of living standards around the world. At the same time, there remain serious challenges, including serious financial crises, insecurity, poverty, exclusion and inequality within and among societies. Considerable obstacles to further integration and full participation in the global economy remain for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, as well as for some countries with economies in transition. Unless the benefits of social and economic development are extended to all countries, a growing number of people in all countries and even entire regions will remain marginalized from the global economy. The Commission reiterates the need for immediate action in order to overcome those obstacles affecting peoples and countries and to realize the full potential of opportunities presented for the benefit of all. The Commission stresses that the social impact and dimension of globalization deserve further attention.

3. Globalization offers opportunities and challenges. The developing countries and countries with economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to those challenges and opportunities. Globalization should be fully inclusive and equitable, and there is a strong need for policies and measures at the national and international levels, formulated and implemented with the full and effective participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to help them respond effectively to those challenges and opportunities.

4. In an increasingly globalizing world, renewed and effective partnerships between developed countries and developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition, are required to achieve the internationally agreed social development objectives and commitments, including those adopted at the World Summit for Social Development and the further initiatives adopted at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, and the internationally agreed

development goals including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.¹

5. The Commission welcomes the prominence given to the New Partnership for Africa's Development² in the report of the Secretary-General on national and international cooperation for social development³ as an example of a partnership among Governments. It also recognizes that the objectives and action plans enunciated in the New Partnership are consistent with the internationally agreed development goals including those contained in the Millennium Declaration as well as those spelled out in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development,⁴ particularly its commitment seven on accelerating the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries, and the outcome document of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.⁵

6. The Commission invites the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to continue to include consideration of the integration of economic and social policies as one of the thematic areas to be addressed in future debates.

7. National capacity is one of the key factors in implementing social development policies and fulfilling national responsibilities. Each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development and the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized. Enhanced international cooperation is essential to implement the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development⁶ as well as the further initiatives for social development and to address the challenges of globalization. In this regard, international cooperation has a vital role in assisting developing countries as well as some countries with economies in transition in the strengthening of their human, institutional and technological capacity. Without the building of such capacity, it will be difficult to ensure that social policy concerns are integrated within the policy planning and budgeting processes. The Commission therefore urges the international community to continue to assist developing countries in their capacity-building in order to promote social development.

8. Given the importance of education as a primary and critical component in any development strategy, in particular for the elimination of illiteracy, the Commission emphasizes the relevance of cooperation in educational matters at the national and international levels.

¹ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

² A/57/304, annex.

³ E/CN.5/2003/5 and Corr.1.

⁴ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

⁵ General Assembly resolution S-24/2.

⁶ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

9. Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, demands a new partnership between developed and developing countries. In this context, the Commission stresses the importance of the commitment recently made by heads of State and Government to achieving sound policies, good governance at all levels and the rule of law, as well as to mobilizing domestic resources, attracting international flows, promoting international trade as an engine for development, increasing international financial and technical cooperation for development, sustainable debt financing and external debt relief, and enhancing the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems.

10. The Commission recognizes that a substantial increase in official development assistance and other resources will be required if developing countries are to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. To build support for official development assistance, heads of State and Government have pledged to further improve policies and development strategies, both nationally and internationally, to enhance aid effectiveness.

11. In that context, the Commission urges developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards achieving the target of providing 0.7 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance to developing countries and from 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance to least developed countries, as reconfirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and encourages developing countries to build on progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets. The Commission acknowledges the efforts of all donors, commends those donors whose official development assistance contributions exceed, reach or are increasing towards the targets, and underlines the importance of undertaking an examination of the means and time frames for achieving the targets and goals.

12. Recipient and donor countries, as well as international institutions, should strive to make official development assistance more effective.

13. The Commission underlines the responsibility of the private sector at the national and international levels, including small and large companies and transnational corporations, regarding not only the economic and financial but also the development, social, gender and environmental implications of their activities, their responsibilities towards their workers and their contributions to achieving sustainable development including social development. In this context, the Commission emphasizes the need to take concrete actions within the United Nations system and through the participation of all relevant stakeholders on corporate responsibility and accountability.

14. Partnerships among all relevant actors are increasingly becoming part of national and international cooperation for social development. Within countries, partnerships among the Government,

civil society and the private sector can contribute effectively to the achievement of social development goals. At the international level, the recent initiatives towards building voluntary partnerships for social development should be encouraged and discussed further at, inter alia, the intergovernmental level.

15. Cross-sectoral and integrated policies that take into account the needs and interests of all members of society, as well as their contributions to national development, and that mainstream a gender perspective should be promoted.

16. The Commission calls upon all relevant development partners to give adequate attention to productive and sustainable employment, as appropriate, in their development policies. Employment strategies can have a substantial impact on poverty eradication, social development and gender equality and should be developed in harmony with economic growth strategies and structural reforms. The Commission sees the involvement of social partners in cooperating with Governments in the formulation and implementation of employment strategies as an important element in ensuring their success. The Commission stresses the need to design appropriate labour and employment policies that will support both growth with employment and employment that supports social development goals.

17. Fulfilment of sustainable development objectives should aim at ensuring, inter alia, quality employment and defending workers rights and interests and, to this effect, the Commission notes the need to promote respect for the relevant United Nations and International Labour Organization conventions.

18. The Commission encourages the strengthening of cooperation among countries, inter alia, to address the issues of labour-market information and skills standards certification as well as transnational issues on labour migration, with a view to protecting the rights and dignity of migrant workers.

19. The Commission stresses the necessity of ensuring the effective involvement of developing countries in the international economic decision-making process through, inter alia, greater participation in international economic forums, thereby ensuring the transparency and accountability of international financial institutions with respect to according a central position for social development in their policies and programmes.

20. The Commission notes the increasing operational coordination and cooperation achieved between the United Nations funds and programmes and the international financial institutions, while taking into account their respective competencies and mandates. In this context, the Commission invites the international financial institutions to strengthen further their efforts to ensure that an improved social outcome is incorporated into their programmes of assistance, taking into account the fact that poverty reduction strategies should be nationally owned. Where Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers exist, a broad platform is necessary to place them within a wider context where all social objectives would be adequately taken into account.

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