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Welcome and thank you for joining us at the 2019 Civil Society Forum.

Since 2006 the Civil Society Forum has provided space for NGOs and other members of civil society to gather for collaboration and discussion on the themes and deliberations of The Commission for Social Development (CSocD). Each year, the planning teams for the Forum and the Commission work collaboratively to integrate the contribution of Civil Society into the workings of the Commission.

During the CSocD and the Civil Society Forum, we invite each of us to remember the opening words of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development which are as true and guiding today as when they were written in March 1995.

“For the first time in history, at the invitation of the United Nations, we gather as heads of State and Government to recognize the significance of social development and human well-being for all and to give to these goals the highest priority both now and into the twenty-first century. We acknowledge that the people of the world have shown in different ways an urgent need to address profound social problems, especially poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, that affect every country. It is our task to address both their underlying and structural causes and their distressing consequences in order to reduce uncertainty and insecurity in the life of people.”

We welcome your active participation during the Civil Society Forum and hope the Program booklet along with the Civil Society Declaration will:

- Serve as a guide to active participation in both the Forum and the Commission
- Clarify the connections among the Civil Society Declaration, The Commission for Social Development, and the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030
- Enable all of us to bring key themes of the Civil Society Declaration to discussion at side events, with your constituencies, and for questions or discussion at the conference itself
- Focus on the core vision that each of our NGOs share and which motivates us in our particular mission to see through the lens of those most in need, most excluded and most vulnerable

In anticipation of the 57th Commission for Social Development, the NGO Committee for Social Development created the Grassroots Survey 2018-2019 on Social Protection as a way to give voice to NGOs on the ground working day to day with those left furthest behind. We received 202 responses from NGOs in 28 countries. A report of the responses to the survey questions as well as analytic briefs will be available on the Committee's website: www.ngosocdev.org under the DOCUMENTS heading.

Reclaiming Leadership on Social Well-Being: The Indispensable Role of Government in Promoting Social Protection and Transformative Fiscal and Wage Policy

Civil Society Declaration
United Nations 57th Commission for Social Development

Across the globe, in diverse cultural and national contexts, signs abound of a fraying of the social fabric. Longstanding institutions and social arrangements are buckling in the face of a long-simmering dissatisfaction with the prevailing order, which is now erupting to the surface. Despite the gains that this order has brought about in many metrics of human well-being, large numbers of people have seen their opportunities stagnate, improve negligibly, or even decline. In this context, some leaders have sought to curtail public institutions' traditional obligations to citizens, implementing austerity measures in the hope that free markets will pick up the slack. However, such an approach fails to reflect how long-term stability, prosperity, and trust are actually built within societies and the decisive role that government must play in bringing about such conditions.

Rather than shy away from their responsibilities, it is now—in this moment of a crisis of faith in leadership—that government can prove its indispensability. For this reason, we, speaking on behalf of civil society, commend the Commission on Social Development for choosing as this year's priority theme "Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies." Although these often attract less political attention than other issues, they are precisely the measures that have direct, tangible, and lasting impacts on entire countries, and particularly on the lives of the most vulnerable.

In this enterprise, civil society stands ready to complement and help shape state efforts at every turn—providing a grassroots perspective on program design, empowering people to participate and have a voice, nurturing an informed citizenry, and unleashing the capacity of ordinary people to be creative agents of their own communities' well-being. And the private sector may have an important role to play in many cases, although people's ability to live dignified, healthy lives cannot be conditioned on the potential to turn a profit or the caprices of the market.¹ In the final analysis, national governments must take primary responsibility in this endeavor, and international bodies are needed to set standards and ensure implementation.

The advancement of constructive social protection, wage, and fiscal policies lies at the heart of this Commission's mandate to serve as the world's premier forum for the exploration and promotion of humanity's economic and social development, consistent with international human rights obligations. Because of this, we encourage Member States to take this opportunity to earnestly learn from one another's experiences, to reflect thoughtfully on devising locally-appropriate measures that will mean the most to those furthest behind, and to summon the political will to implement and defend them with resolve.

Social protection: A stabilizing force in a world of instability

We live in a time of economic freneticism—with precarious, temporary work and uneven development the norm in low-income countries, and increasing automation, the rise of the "gig economy" and "zero-hour" contracts,² and falling social mobility in high-income countries.³ As a result, citizens everywhere, and particularly marginalized groups, are too often deprived of solid footing on which to build a future and unsure of where to turn for support. In short, they live in social insecurity.

1 In cases in which social services are provided by the private sector, it is essential to guarantee proper oversight—public institutions cannot simply outsource their obligations, but must collaborate with and regulate private providers to ensure access, affordability, and transparency (Magdalena Sepúlveda, "What does human rights law have to do with social protection systems? Operationalizing the human rights principles of equality and transparency," United Nations 63rd Commission on the Status of Women, 2018).

2 Phillip Inman, "Zero-hours contracts: what are they?", The Guardian, 2013.

3 Diego Alejo Vázquez Pimentel et al., Reward work, not wealth: To end the inequality crisis, we must build an economy for ordinary working people, not the rich and powerful, Oxfam, 2018.

As we highlighted in our statement for the last session of this Commission,⁴ coherent social protection systems are demonstrated to be a straightforward and effective way to address the most fundamental of needs and promote constructive engagement in the life of society across sectors. Comprehensive systems in social security and health care, as well as housing and education, have proven a decisive and comparably low-cost⁵ means of improving public health, of combating poverty and building resilience in poor people, of bolstering decent employment and equitable economic growth, of promoting human rights, and of fostering more socially cohesive societies. Because of such successes, social protection has emerged as a central element of the 2030 Agenda, enshrined in Target 1.3. As mentioned in the Sustainable Development Goals Report of 2017, giving “people in every part of the world the support they need to lift themselves out of poverty in all its manifestations in the very essence of sustainable development.”⁶

Comprehensive social protection is sometimes viewed as a luxury of wealthy countries. However, in recent decades, many countries have found success in institutionalizing social protection programs that offer services and resources that families and local communities are unable to provide. Such measures have become more and more necessary as traditional, informal support systems have shown themselves unable to cope with the strains of increasing national and international migration, changing family structures, new demographics of aging populations, and the growing frequency of economic and environmental disasters.

In this connection, Southeast Asia offers several good examples of a state-led commitment to social protection. Following the Asian Financial Crisis of the 1990s and the consequent rise in awareness about employment and income vulnerabilities, as well as those related to illness and aging, most governments in the region expanded both targeted and universal social assistance.⁷ In 2001, for instance, Thailand introduced free universal healthcare that has helped decrease infant and child mortality, HIV infections, the effects of diabetes, and workers’ sick days. Moreover, since 2008, its allowance for the elderly has reduced old-age poverty by providing cash payments to all citizens aged sixty and over who do not receive other public pensions.⁸ And in neighboring Cambodia, bolstered by robust economic growth over the past two decades, the government has recently resolved to accelerate falling poverty rates and tackle the country’s significant fragmentation and gaps in its social assistance programming.⁹ In 2017, it approved a Social Protection Policy Framework—an ambitious 10-year roadmap designed to expand social protection services to all citizens and to “harmonize, concentrate and strengthen existing schemes or programs in order to increase the effectiveness, transparency and consistency of the whole social protection system.”¹⁰

In light of the above, we once again urge Member States to introduce language into the Commission’s resolutions in accordance with the International Labour Organization’s unanimously-adopted Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).¹¹ And as essential as it is to establish “floors”—social and economic baselines below which a society will refuse to let any members fall—it is important to not lose sight of the universality underlying the idea of social protection.

4 NGO Coalition on Social Development, *Social Protection: A Coherent Strategy for Shared Prosperity*, Civil Society Declaration for the United Nations 56th Commission for Social Development, 2018.

5 A recent study of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors shows that at least a basic level of social protection is affordable nearly everywhere. About half of the 150 countries studied could close the gap by allocating less than 2% of their GDP to social protection, and 80% could do so with less than 5% of GDP. Only about 13 countries would need international assistance to finance minimum social protection (Mira Bierbaum et al., *Social Protection Floor Index, 2017 - Update and Country Studies*, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2017).

6 United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017: Goal 1*, 2017.

7 Sarah Cook and Jonathan Pincus. “Poverty, Inequality and Social Protection in Southeast Asia: An Introduction”, *Journal of Southeast Asian Economies*, 2014.

8 International Labour Organization, “Thailand: A regional example in social protection”, 2017.

9 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Social Protection Review of Cambodia*, 2017.

10 Kingdom of Cambodia, *National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025*, 2017.

11 The Recommendation (2012) stimulates that Member States introduce a basic level of social protection (i.e., social protection floors) that should be available to all and upon which higher levels of security should be built for as many people as possible, as soon as possible. It defines the twin objectives of income security and health security as the ability to access all essential goods and services—acknowledging that there needs to be a well balanced combination between cash transfers and the provision of services, and that different types of benefits and schemes (i.e., social insurance, social assistance, universal benefits or labor market measures) can achieve protection. Moreover, a constituent principle is the financing of protection on a solidarity basis: only solidarity-based formal social protection systems can effectively inequality, poverty, and insecurity. The Recommendation outlines provisions for effective access to quality health care, including maternity care, and basic income security for children (assuring access to nutrition, education and care), for persons in active age (with particular attention to sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability), and for older persons.

Ultimately, social protection should be designed to reach the entirety of a society—addressing the varying types of need and vulnerability which people of all social classes pass through over the course of their lives. While maintaining this comprehensive approach, policies must be gender-sensitive, taking into account the crucial role women have traditionally played as caregivers—especially as women are at a higher risk of poverty across the globe.¹²

When universally applied and embraced, social protection ceases to be seen as unsustainable and dependency-fostering handouts, and rather helps reshape long-term relations within a society. It broadens and deepens the social contract, promoting greater understanding of the fact that the well-being of the individual is dependent upon, and contributes to, the well-being of the whole.

Progressive fiscal and wage policy: A leveling force in a world of extreme inequality

While comprehensive social protection is comparatively low-cost, in some cases it will no doubt require financing through the levying of new taxes. But beyond this, in many countries, a substantial restructuring of tax codes and, generally, major reforms in fiscal policy are sorely needed—including through the raising of the minimum wage and the curbing of illicit financial flows. Both within and across countries, income inequality has reached unprecedented and unconscionable levels in recent years. And it is growing exponentially: while in 2009 the combined wealth of the world's 380 richest people equaled that of the poorest 50% of the planet's population, by 2017 just 42 individuals had as much as the poorest half of the world—that is, 3.8 billion people.¹³ As this trend arises in part from an exploitation of unaligned policies across national boundaries, the international community must set well-considered global standards for decent wages and to address the practice of havening wealth away from the societies in which it was created. Now more than ever, there is a crying need for a paradigm shift in fiscal and wage policy.

Research from more than a 150 low-, middle-, and high-income countries over nearly four decades has shown that progressive personal and corporate income taxes—especially when combined with higher public expenditure on social protection and related programs—reduce income inequality.¹⁴ The same has also been found to be the case for raising the minimum wage, as well as for expanding labor rights.¹⁵ Although increasing the minimum wage cannot be approached haphazardly, given its potential to adversely affect employment rates,¹⁶ this remains an area in which governments can have immediate and direct impact on inequality and on the income of the lowest earners.

To take another regional example, for most of the 21st century, Latin America has largely bucked the international trend toward greater inequality. While the region presents a diversity of political and economic trajectories, in the mid-2000s numerous governments put in place measures to increase public revenues and social spending, and in a number of cases raise minimum wages. Such policies helped dramatically reduce the indices of poverty and especially extreme poverty in these countries. However, with the global financial slowdown and the fall of commodity prices, there has been an uptick in Latin American poverty rates since 2015. Coinciding with a flurry of scandal and plummeting public confidence in government, the political pendulum in many countries has recently swung in the opposite direction— toward reducing public spending and a return to more laissez-faire economic policies. As a result, much of the good is being thrown out with the bad, and many of the earlier gains toward increased equity are at risk of being reversed.¹⁷

In contrast, the small country of Namibia, once the most unequal in the world, has not only made major strides in tackling poverty through fiscal and wage policy reforms in the past two decades, but has accelerated such efforts in recent years. Through a combination of social spending (particularly on free primary and secondary education and universal pensions),

12 OECD, "Women are at a higher risk of poverty than men, especially in old age: Relative poverty risk of men and women by age, OECD average, mid-2000s", in *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*, OECD Publishing, 2012.

13 Inequality.org, *Facts: Global Inequality*.

14 Jorge Martínez-Vázquez et al., "The Impact of Tax and Expenditure Policies on Income Distribution: Evidence from a Large Panel of Countries", *Review of Public Economics*, 2012.

15 Florence Jaumotte and Carolina Osorio Buitron, "Inequality and Labor Market Institutions", IMF Staff Discussion Note, 2015.

16 For example, in some southern European countries, strong unions and high minimum wages have led to high structural unemployment, particularly among youth, and declining levels of competitiveness (*ibid.*).

17 Development Finance International and Oxfam, *The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index: A new global ranking of governments based on what they are doing to tackle the gap between rich and poor*, 2017.

some of Africa's most progressive tax rates,¹⁸ and increases in minimum wages in low-income sectors,¹⁹ Namibia continues to defy the global inequality trend: its Gini coefficient²⁰ has fallen by some 15 points since 1993. And in the same timeframe, the poverty rate has more than halved, from 69% of the population to under 30%, with extreme poverty dropping from 53% to 23%.²¹

It is not a coincidence that high minimum wages and top-tier taxation rates tend to correlate strongly with high rankings in human development,²² happiness,²³ and many other measures of well-being.²⁴ In many societies that embrace such arrangements, the majority of the population seems to have embraced an ethic of reciprocity and responsibility to one another, and trusted the state to equitably and judiciously redistribute a share of the resources which membership in those societies—usually an accident of birth—has allowed some to acquire.

It is ideology, then, and not demonstrated experience, that often stands in the way of progress in advancing progressive tax policy and raising the minimum wage. At the heart of the problem is a vision of economic relations centered on self-interest rather than service to the common good, which values growth in absolute terms above all else, based on the mistaken belief that such an approach will naturally resolve all other concerns as a matter of course. This outlook also fails to grasp that people tend to understand their own well-being in relational terms—that one's own small step forward may appear imperceptible when others are advancing by leaps and bounds. If leaders wish to govern societies in which all members see their fortunes truly improving, they should act boldly on this front and make the case for policies that will meaningfully uplift the entirety of the population.

Looking beyond the next election cycle to the next generation

In this historical moment of dislocation and disillusion, the importance of a renewal of political leadership cannot be overstated. By resisting the pernicious influence of privileged vested interests, which have done so much to undermine their legitimacy in recent years, and by refocusing their policy-making on what will improve the lives of those in greatest need, traditional public institutions can reclaim their position as the foremost actor in fostering inclusive social development. To do so, they will need to implement social programs not as fleeting, isolated projects of the party in power but as institutionalized systems that can be counted on across generations.

As such, while not losing sight of the necessity to prioritize certain issues and social groups, we urge Member States to take up the challenge of developing ambitious, long-term plans—with an eye toward 2030 and beyond—for comprehensive social protection systems, covering the range of needs across a person's life cycle, as well as substantive fiscal and wage reforms necessary to finance such systems and to foster more equitable societies. While it is all too easy to be blinded by the political difficulties of such a call, it is critical to not lose sight of what is truly at stake: the ability of humanity to adapt and increasingly flourish amidst the challenges and opportunities of this historic inflection point.

18 Ibid.

19 Glenneis Kriel, "Namibian minimum wage increases 25%", *Farmer's Weekly*, 2017; "New minimum wage of N\$1 502 for domestic workers", *The Namibian*, 2017.

20 The standard measure of income disparities.

21 Joseph E. Stiglitz and Anya Schiffrin, "Learning from Namibia", Project Syndicate, 2016.

22 United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Human Development Index.

23 John F. Helliwell et al., *World Happiness Report 2018*.

24 Including human rights, democracy, and freedom (Freedom House, *Freedom in the World Index*, 2018).

Social Protection and Transformative Fiscal and Wage Policy: Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies

**Friday, February 15th, 2019
United Nations HQ, Conference Room 4**

The Civil Society Forum has been planned by the NGO Committee for Social Development in joint sponsorship with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung(FES) and the UN-DESA Division for Inclusive Social Development. This Forum has been organized to prepare civil society participants to engage at the 57th Session of the Commission for Social Development (11 to 21 February 2019 at the UNHQ in New York). This space is to create an inclusive dialogue to foster cooperation between Member States, Civil Society and the United Nations, and to unify behind a common vision in furtherance of the Sustainable Development Goals. Speakers are invited to address and critique the priority theme for the Commission: *Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies*.

Friday, February 15th

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Welcome

Moderator: **Ms. Monica Jahangir-Chowdhury**, Executive Committee Member, NGO Committee for Social Development & Representative to the United Nations, International Movement ATD Fourth World

Remarks:

H.E. Mr. Cheikh Niang, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, Bureau Chair, 57th Commission for Social Development

Ms. Daniela Bas, Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN-DESA

Ms. Bettina Luise Rürup, Executive Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung New York

Ms. Helen Mudora, Program Manager, Partnerships and Networks at Africa Platform for Social Protection

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Keynote Address

Mr. Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, UN Human Rights Council, Professor of Law, New York University School of Law

Civil Society Program

CSOCD57



11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Interactive Panel

Moderator: **Mr. Daniel Perell**, Chair, NGO Committee for Social Development & Representative to the United Nations, Baha'i International Community

Speakers:

Mr. Enemona Adaji, Youth Representative to the UN, Worldwide Network Nigeria

Mr. Henry Garrido, Executive Director, District Council 37

Ms. Chaumtoli Huq, Associate Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law

Mr. Paul Catipon, President and CEO, Netpro Communications Inc.

Mr. Amson Sibanda, Chief of the Social Policy Analysis Section, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN-DESA

Ms. Helen Mudora, Program Manager, Partnerships and Networks at Africa Platform for Social Protection

1:00 AM – 3:00 PM

LUNCH (on your own)

3:00 PM – 3:45 PM

Discussion on Civil Society Declaration

Based on what you have learned this week, are there specific modifications, additions, or edits you think should be made to the declaration?

3:45 PM – 4:45 PM

Facilitated Regional Breakouts

1. What trends have you noticed in relation to Inequality in your country/region in recent times? Is it on the increase/ decrease in the areas of wealth, income, opportunities? Share an example.
2. Are you aware of any fiscal /wage or social protection policies of your government that helps reduce or increase inequalities? Share an example
3. Would you have any suggestions for policy makers in reducing inequalities in your country/region
4. As a civil society member from your region do you have any suggestions/ strategies for regional/ national advocacy on the issue?

Facilitated Breakout on the Commission for Social Development (CSocD)

1. What are its strengths which we should build on?
2. What modifications should be made to its processes and outcomes?
3. What concrete suggestions do we have for the Member States?

4:45 PM – 5:15 PM

Report back from regional breakouts and breakout on CSocD

5:15 PM – 5:30 PM

Concluding Remarks & Farewell

**Monica Jahangir-Chowdhury, Executive Committee Member,
NGO Committee for Social Development and Representative to the United Nations,
International Movement ATD Fourth World**

Monica Jahangir-Chowdhury is the UN Representative of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, a global movement working in partnership with the poorest communities and families in over 30 countries and accompanying them in the realization of their rights. At the United Nations, her main mission is to create and maintain spaces where people with the direct experience of poverty participate in UN processes by sharing their experience and knowledge of poverty. Additionally, her advocacy work covers areas such as the human rights approach to poverty eradication, the right to participation, social policies, and in particular social protection systems and floors. Ms. Jahangir-Chowdhury serves as a member at large of the executive committee of the NGO Committee for Social Development, where she has been more specifically involved with advocacy related to social protection. She holds a Masters in International Relations from Panthéon Sorbonne University (France) and Bachelor's degrees in both French Law and Common Law from Paris Nanterre University (France).

**H.E. Mr. Cheikh Niang, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations,
Bureau Chair, 57th Commission for Social Development**

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Niang served as Senegal's Ambassador to Japan — concurrently accredited to Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Viet Nam and Singapore — a post he first took up in November 2014. From 2012 to 2014, he was Senegal's Ambassador to the United States, concurrently accredited to Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay. Between 2010 and 2012, Mr. Niang served as Senegal's Ambassador to South Africa, also with jurisdiction in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. From 2006 to 2010, Mr. Niang was Consul General of Senegal in New York. He was first recruited to Senegal's Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1993 as head of the Africa Division.

Daniela Bas, Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN-DESA

Ms. Daniela Bas was appointed Director of DESA's Division for Inclusive Social Development on 9 May 2011. A politologist specialized in international politics, human rights and social development, Ms. Bas has most recently served as Senior Consultant designated by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as expert on human rights to Institutes that operate internationally. She has also provided her expertise on anti-discrimination issues at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Ms. Bas has worked for close to 10 years for the United Nations as a Professional Officer in social development and human rights, traveling around the world on behalf of the UN and also as a speaker at international conventions. She has also held a number of other significant assignments including as Special Adviser on "Fundamental Rights" for the former Vice President of the European Commission; as the Italian representative designated by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on the topic "Tourism for All" to the European Commission; and as journalist and broadcaster for Italian Radio and TV. Ms. Bas is a Board Member of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and of the Committee to Promote non-Armed and non-Violent Civil Defense of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Bettina Luise Rürup, Executive Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung New York.

Bettina Luise Rürup is the Executive Director of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) office at the United Nations in New York. Associated with FES for more than 25 years, Ms. Rürup served as head of department at FES Headquarters in Berlin as well as at offices in Chile, India, Turkey and Thuringia, Germany. Prior to joining FES, she was involved with interdisciplinary field research on rural development in Costa Rica and Tanzania. Ms. Rürup has published on a wide range of topics related to development, social justice and democracy.

Helen Mudora, Program Manager, Partnerships and Networks at Africa Platform for Social Protection

Helen Mudora Obande (Kenya) is a human rights defender with a special interest in vulnerable groups. She is a Programme Manager, in charge of Partnerships and Network Development at the Africa Platform for Social Protection (APSP).

Ms. Mudora has a strong background in working with marginalized groups and in particular women, children, older person and persons with disability. She has previously served as the Executive Director of the Association of Media Women in Kenya, and the United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK), the umbrella organization for Disabled Persons in Kenya. Ms. Mudora has an MA in Women Studies from San Francisco State University in California, is an alumni of the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Programme, and a recipient of the Excellent Student award in Women and Gender Studies, San Francisco State University, California.

Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, UN Human Rights Council, Professor of Law, New York University School of Law

Mr. Alston was appointed United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in June 2014, by the Human Rights Council. He is John Norton Pomeroy Professor of Law at New York University School of Law.

Professor Alston has also served the United Nations in various capacities since the 1980s. He was the first Rapporteur of the U.N. Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights from 1987 until 1990, and then chaired the Committee for eight years until the end of 1998. During this period, he played a central role in efforts to reform and streamline the U.N. treaty body system and, as an Independent Expert appointed by the U.N. Secretary-General, he reported to the General Assembly on measures to ensure the long-term effectiveness of the U.N. human rights treaty bodies (reports in 1989, 1993 and 1997). Between 2002 and 2007, he served as Special Adviser to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Millennium Development Goals, and between 2004 and 2010, as Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions. He was also UNICEF's legal adviser throughout the process of drafting the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Daniel Perell, Chair, NGO Committee for Social Development and Representative to the United Nations, Baha'i International Community

Mr. Perell joined the Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office as a Representative in 2011. His areas of work include social and sustainable development, global citizenship, human rights, the role of religion in society, and defense of the Baha'i Community. He is currently a Global Organizing Partner of the NGO Major Group and the Chair of the NGO Committee for Social Development. In 2010, Mr. Perell received a JD from the University of Virginia, School of Law and an MA in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University. Mr. Perell has worked with the international Service for Human Rights in Geneva, the UN in Aceh, Indonesia and other organizations in the Marshall Islands and Chile.

Enemona Adaji, Youth Representative to the UN, Worldwide Network Nigeria

Enemona Emmanuel Adaji is the Youth Representative to the UN, Worldwide Network Nigeria. Mr. Adaji is the founder of Voiceless Voices, a non-governmental organization that focuses on the provision of education and health to the most vulnerable in Nigeria especially women and children. He is passionate about social justice and all-round development of Nigeria. PhD Researcher in Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Nottingham.

Mr. Adaji has played major roles in other projects and events such as leading the Liter of Light Nigeria team which is part of a global grassroots movement that has installed over 1 million affordable, sustainable and portable solar products in houses deprived of constant electricity and marginalised communities. Also, as Managing Director coordinates the University of Nottingham Africa Summit which provides a platform for key issues and solutions be discussed by African leaders and industry experts.

Henry Garrido, Executive Director of Distric Council 37

DC 37 is NYC's largest municipal employees union with 125,000 members and nearly 50,000 retirees. Under Mr. Garrido's direction, the union recently ratified a 44-month collective bargaining agreement with the City of New York. Mr. Garrido served as DC 37 associate director and helped establish the Municipal Employees Housing Program, which coordinates grants for first-time homebuyers and provides foreclosure prevention services as well as education and counselling. He also directed the union's white paper project, which addressed city waste by investigating contracting out and identifying revenue sources. Mr. Garrido is a trustee on the city's Workforce Investment Board, which advises the mayor on jobs and economic development, and serves on the board of the New York City Employees Retirement System (NYCERS). A native of the Dominican Republic, he is the first Latino to head DC 37 since it was formed in 1944.

Chaumtoli Huq, Associate Professor of Law, CUNY School of Law

Ms. Huq is also the founder/Editor of an innovative law and media non-profit focused on law and social justice called Law@theMargins (www.lawatthemargins.com). Her expertise lies in labor and employment, and human rights. From 2014 to 2015, she was a Senior Research Fellow with the American Institute for Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) where she researched the labor conditions of garment workers after the Rana Plaza building collapse. She has produced two short documentaries on her work in Bangladesh called Sramik Awaaz: Workers Voices, and a video on Bangladeshi women organizing in New York called Naree Shongotok. Ms. Huq has devoted her professional career to public service focusing on issues impacting low-income New Yorkers. In 2014, she was appointed as the General Counsel for Litigation for the New York City Office of the Public Advocate, becoming then the highest-ranking Bangladeshi-American in New York City government, for which she received a New American Heroes award from the New American Leaders Project.

Paul Catipon, President and CEO, Netpro Communications Inc.

Netpro is a security system integration company based in NY, providing CCTV surveillance, intrusion detection, and network security solutions to the major transportation companies such as the NY city subway, Metro North and Long Island Railroad, and Amtrak. Prior to leading Netpro Communications, Mr. Catipon worked as the Assistant VP and IT Manager at First Federal Bank of California, and as the Network Manager for the Brooklyn/Queens Catholic Medical Centers during the 1990's. Mr. Catipon is a member of the commission of New Humanity's Economy of Communion project and the Focolare Movement. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering from California State Univ. at Long Beach, an MBA with concentration in Telecommunication from Keller Graduate School of Management, and is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional.

**Amson Sibanda, Chief of the Social Policy Analysis Section,
Division for Social Development, UN-DESA**

Mr. Amson Sibanda is Chief of the Social Policy Analysis Section in the Division for Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. He has over 15 years of progressively responsible experience in a broad range of sustainable development issues at the global, regional and national levels, including the various intergovernmental processes that underpin this work. As Chief of the Social Policy Analysis Section in the Division for Inclusive Social Development, DESA, he leads and manages the activities undertaken by the team that supports the implementation of the social pillar of the 2030 Agenda and the World Summit for Social Development.

Mr. Sibanda began his UN career with the Economic Commission for Africa (2003 – 2007) where he worked on issues ranging from MDGs, population and sustainable development. Prior to joining the United Nations system, Mr. Sibanda worked as a Researcher at Brown University and as a post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania. He also taught at the University of Zimbabwe and worked as a Statistician/Demographer at the Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office. He has published several articles in leading journals on children's schooling, gender and education, HIV/AIDS, fertility, household structure, and migration and labor force participation. He has also co-edited a book on The Demography of South Africa published by M.E. Sharpe in 2005.

Mr. Sibanda holds a Doctorate and an M.A. in Demography from the University of Pennsylvania, an MSc in Population Studies and B.A. in Geography (Honors) from the University of Zimbabwe.

Lyn Hensle-Hirsch, Chair, 2019 Civil Society Forum, Vice-Chair, NGO Committee for Social Development, and Representative to the United Nations, International Federation of Business and Professional Women

In addition to her responsibilities as the Chair of the Civil Society Forum 2019 and Vice-Chair of the NGO Committee for Social Development, Ms. Hensle-Hirsch is on the Executive Committee and Treasurer for NGO Financing for Development and member of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, and Alliance 8.7. Her areas of focus include social development and women's rights and empowerment. She joined Enterprising and Professional Women-NYS following a 35+ year career in Financial Services.

Every year, the Civil Society Forum receives valuable support from faculty and students for translation and interpretation services.

Our volunteers come from every corner of the world and have a strong interest in working with NGOs. Many of our volunteers are also completing an academic year at an American university through the Fulbright Program managed by the Institute of International Education.

The Civil Society Working Group wishes to acknowledge the following individual interpreters' valuable contribution to the Forum's success:

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UN Acronyms & Useful Terminology

CSOCD57

Advocacy: Advocacy is all about taking what you've learned and putting it into action. Actions of advocacy can include: information campaigns, panel discussions, art exhibitions, film screenings, petition circulation, and lobbying.

Civil Society: The term used to describe the sum of non-governmental organizations and other related institutions that advocate for the interests of citizens at large.

CSocD - Commission for Social Development: United Nation conference generally lasting two weeks, and generally in February, which advises the Economic and Social Council on matters relating to social policies, and the social field in general. Further, the Commission highlights social development themes based on the Copenhagen Summit for Social Development held in 1995 with emphasis on poverty eradication, full employment and social integration. The Copenhagen Declaration put the person at the center of development.

DESA-DSPD - Department of Economic & Social Affairs - Division for Social Policy & Development: Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA is charged with creating policies and programming to ensure sustainable development for all.

ECOSOC - Economic and Social Council: UN body responsible for follow-up to major UN conferences, ECOSOC seeks to advance consensus building, debate, and innovation on the economic, social, and environmental facets of sustainable development. The current president of the Economic and Social Council is Her Excellency Inga Rhonda King, Ambassador of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the UN.

GA - General Assembly: The primary policy making, deliberative, and representative organ of the United Nations, composed of all 193 member states. The General Assembly provides a forum for discussion, debate, and adoption of UN resolutions and agendas.

HLPF - High Level Political Forum: The Forum meets annually in July, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly for two days in September.

Human Rights: Human rights are universal rights, freedoms, and protections to which all human beings are entitled. All human beings have, by nature of being human, human rights. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (a document that outlines 30 agreed upon human rights) states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Categories of human rights include social, political, and economic rights.

ILO - International Labour Organization: Comprised of 187 member states, ILO is a UN affiliated organization that creates policy, programs, and labor standards through the cooperation of governments, workers, and employers.

LDCs - Least Developed Countries: countries with the lowest gross national income, high economic vulnerability, and weak human assets.

LLDCs – Land Locked Developing Countries: The economic and other disadvantages experienced by such countries makes the majority of landlocked countries least developed countries (LDC), with inhabitants of these countries occupying the bottom billion tier of the world's population in terms of poverty.

UN Acronyms & Useful Terminology

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NGO - Non-Governmental Organization: non-profit, voluntary organizations working on a local, national or international level. NGOs bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through raising awareness and building coalitions.

PGA - President of the General Assembly: Currently, Her Excellency Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés of Ecuador is the President of the General Assembly.

Poverty: The state of not having access to the resources to satisfy basic human needs, such as nutrition, clean water, or shelter. It is estimated that about one-fifth of the world's population lives in extreme poverty. Poverty pertains not only to income-poverty and is multi-dimensional. Poverty also refers to a lack of capacity to participate in society.

SDGs: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a comprehensive and ambitious set of 17 goals that were created to follow-up and continue the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals. The Goals include ending poverty, protecting the environment, creating sustainable infrastructure, guaranteeing gender equality, granting access to education for all, and more. The SDGs are also referred to as “Agenda 2030” or the “Global Goals.”

SG - Secretary General: Currently Antonio Guterres, the Secretary General is the public spokesperson and leader of the UN, and is the head of the Secretariat, one of the three UN organs.

Social Protection Floors: Reaffirming that the right to social security is a human right, social protection floors are nationally-defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. These guarantees should ensure at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and basic income security. National social protection floors should comprise at least the following four social security guarantees, as defined at the national level:

1. access to essential health care, including maternity care;
2. basic income security for children, providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services;
3. basic income security for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability;
4. basic income security for older persons.

Such guarantees should be provided to all residents and all children, as defined in national laws and regulations, and subject to existing international obligations.

UDHR: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a declaration adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948 (now known as International Human Rights Day) that outlines the rights to which every human being is entitled. It is divided into 30 Articles.

UN - United Nations: an international organization founded in 1945 dedicated to maintaining international peace and security, developing positive relations between nations, and promoting social progress, better standards of living, and human rights. There are currently 193 member states (or countries) in the UN.



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