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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: rethinking and strengthening social development
in the contemporary world**

Statement submitted by Federation Europeenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme (FECRIS), 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

The post-2015 agenda for progressing forward to new accomplishments to eradicate extreme poverty for victims of cults, achieve decent work and human rights for all with dignity and rethinking and strengthening social development globally

The accomplishments of the recent 2015 agenda from the Commission for Social Development were a result of considerable hard work and networking. The level of extreme poverty has decreased. In some cases there has been real poverty eradication but there is more to be accomplished. The success that has been effective was based on access and sound research that produced results that accomplished real change that actually fed starving people rather than fundraisers that feed no one. When you encounter the world of the cults or sects this same access is often not available to non-group members.

Authoritarian cult organizations collect enormous sums of money from their members and true believers work extremely hard raising funds for the group. The real human tragedy is that many live in extreme poverty and sacrifice decent work and pay their virtual slave labour earnings to the cult organization, without transparent accountability to fellow members or non-members outside of their community. The imposed isolation whether it is physical or psychological has an exclusionary impact, where the human dignity of the individual is seriously harmed. Those harmed by this process are in need of real assistance to protect fundamental human rights. We at FECRIS assist families and cult victims who suffer under these relentless and unfortunate circumstances. The Commission for Social Development 54 provides a real opportunity to improve the lives of citizens of member states the vital resources of this Commission was designed to facilitate and provide. We at FECRIS want to provide our experience, expertise and critical networking to achieve the Post-2015 Agenda. We want inclusive social education resources, understanding and appropriate support towards recovery and healing for isolated cult victims.

When dealing with the reality of isolated cult communities that are cut off from mainstream society, the twenty-first century phenomenon of terrorism around the world that is rooted in cult offshoots must be considered. We at FECRIS see repeated patterns of social isolation, especially among Young people, where the prevailing growth model for gainful employment is denied to cult members. Preventable extreme poverty denies rights that need due process and protection by member states. The Commission for Social Development should address cult members' access to proper resources. Appropriate educational resources and appropriate training is needed to assist victims.

The strengthening of social development is rooted in access by those truly in need. FECRIS is a resource for those who want to make use of its resources. We have direct contact from cult casualties who seek out help and assistance when their resources have been depleted. We provide a network of professionals and other qualified specialists who address ongoing needs. This is a global phenomenon, and networking with global resources and member states provide an avenue for FECRIS and the CoSD54 to provide appropriate interaction. It is important to pay attention

to inclusivity, especially essential human rights, equitable treatment in the arena of decent work leading to real growth and development of young people.

The ability to have free movement of goods and services is rooted in equitable treatment of cult members that is often denied due to the exploitive structure of authoritarian sect leadership directives that channel money or resources upward for the leadership's personal benefit. Numerous lawsuits, legal actions and media reports have demonstrated that cult leaders are multi-millionaires and even billionaires on the backs of their impoverished members. Senior citizen sect members are most vulnerable to this long term problem and end up with no pension plan provided by their cult or terrorist employers. It must be kept in mind that member states will need to have serious tax restraints in order for social service resources to be made available to address this humanitarian crisis. The Commission for Social Development is developing a growing list of tools that assist policy makers in developing programs to reduce the negative consequences of totalitarian destructive practices and limiting damaging consequences.

In the area of social inclusion it is important to understand the special population needs of isolated sect communities and offshoot cult-like terrorist groups produce. Social inclusion is rooted in the non-discriminatory respect of individual rights and protecting society from persecution over beliefs. In order to address this meaningfully you must have mutual willing partners. Quality information and appropriate education can address this issue but access to these critical resources is what is needed. Our FECRIS federation can network with other interested parties and the CoSD54 structure in contemporary culture, when cult victims cry out for help over issues of extreme poverty, the real need for decent work and social inclusion. Their voice needs to be heard and most importantly understood. FECRIS are truly committed to assisting these voices with respect and compassion and hopefully we will be supported and appreciated.

Social justice is relevant for people-centred and inclusive development. Cult victims have a serious story to tell. Many sect members have been defrauded and some have lost their entire life's savings. Social justice is not just a matter of individual fraud and theft but organizational fraud and theft where fellow members have suffered a similar fate. Support and resources are needed to remedy these injustices and inequities on an international scale.

Civil society organizations can network and facilitate through building capacity, along with relevant human rights education. Especially when we are dealing with totalitarian groups that deprive their members of rights It is important to examine certain categories like young people, women and senior citizens of both sexes, where these abuses need to be exposed and the appropriate remedy applied. It is important to assist former cult members from stigmatization. FECRIS is dedicated to supporting and working with others for this common cause. Let us overcome discrimination in order to further social progress and re-think workable solutions for addressing and overcoming preventable extreme poverty. We have a highly motivated population of former sect members that want to make the world a better place and sincerely improve themselves to make a real difference for the future. There is a basic lack of social protection for former sect members that need viable and constructive options. Civil society organizations and member states can provide required protection, education and networking. The achievements of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 Agenda potentially provide

the necessary tools but delivering the appropriate avenues is where the CoSD54 is truly relevant.

Restoring the principle of equality and ensuring decent work for all is rooted in accessing those resources. Member states play a vital role in informing their citizens through appropriate avenues supported by legal and financial resources. Transparency and suitable accountability can go a long way in detecting fraud and abuse and prevent harm and facilitate recovery to citizens who need them most. FECRIS federation and the Commission for Social Development plays a vital role in social policy formation and development in achieving a people-centred approach to social development for mainstream culture and civil society. Leaving totalitarian exclusive cults or sects is challenging.

Inclusive, just and socially welcoming venues where freedom of conscience and choice are truly respected are truly welcomed. Jobs and career paths are built on the foundation of what is truly available to you; networking with this troubled population can provide decent work, education options, career planning and social services from member states. This new path of social inclusion provides meaningful avenues for true growth and contemporary development, personally and socially. Productive employment is a viable option and is important to sustain a real livelihood. Escaping poverty provides access to social inclusion. Destructive cults force dependency and extreme poverty to the detriment of the individual. Room for social dialogue can be restored and supported meaningfully. Social policy can be improved when you have dialogue that contributes to a better world. Public funding for social protection programs can be better served when relevant citizens are active in the dialogue process towards meaningful social development.
