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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Joint written statement* submitted by Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities), New Humanity, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, the Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, the Association Points-Coeur, the Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, the Dominicans for Justice and Peace - Order of Preachers, the International Institute of Mary Our Help of the Salesians of Don Bosco, the International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development, the Marist International Solidarity Foundation Onlus, VIVAT International, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 August 2011]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

International solidarity and the right to development: Keys to achieve MDGs through global partnership (MDG8)

The co-signatories NGOs wish to congratulate Mrs. Virginia Dandan for her appointment as Independent Expert on International Solidarity and Human Rights and welcome her report at this 18th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council. Furthermore, they welcome the initiative of the Council to organise the panel on the Right to Development, considering that the 4th of December will mark the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development.

The co-signing NGOs firmly believe that International Solidarity and the Right to Development are interlinked, mutually reinforcing, and are both keys to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 8 on Global Partnership for Development, which is, in turn, crucial to the realisation of all the other MDGs.

International Solidarity that includes, but is not limited to, international cooperation, springs out of the notion of a communion of responsibilities and interest between individuals, groups and States, connected by the ideal of fraternity and the search for the common good. It also emphasises the concept of collective and extraterritorial obligations of States with respect to international cooperation and assistance, a concept firmly established within international human rights instruments¹.

The Declaration on the Right to Development says in Article 3 that “States have the primary responsibility for creation of national and international conditions favourable to realisation of the right to development, but, meanwhile, they have the duty to co-operate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development”.

MDG8 on Global Partnership for Development, offers an important tool for the implementation of the Right to Development, focusing, in particular, on aid, trade and debt relief that are three practical and crucial domains for the elimination of the obstacles to global development.

International Solidarity, the Right to Development and MDG8 shift the paradigm of international cooperation and assistance from a vision of mere charity and moral obligation, to an affirmation of solidarity rights and social justice. Driving this shift is the fact that nations, as a human family, should pursue the realisation of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” and of Article 28 which states “everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized”.

Our globalised and interconnected world reveals contradictions of economic, cultural and technological progress that offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few and leaves millions of others not only on the margins of progress, but in living conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity.

The current process of globalisation is not wrong in itself, but a significant number of the driving forces behind it are, indeed, immoral: prioritising profit at any cost and with every means over the dignity and human rights of individuals; unregulated markets; financial

¹ United Nations Charter, Article 1.1, Article 55 and 56; UDHR, Art. 28; CESCR, Art. 2, Art. 11.2; CESCR, general comment No. 3, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 1; CRC, Article 4; DRD, Article 3 and 4; Millennium Declaration

speculations; some privatisation; asymmetric global markets; excessive consumption of goods; an economic model that, in spite of all the evidence of its failure - unveiled by the current economic crises - is still centred upon the chase of unlimited growth. Such globalisation risks to be socially catastrophic, environmentally unsustainable, geopolitically destabilising, lethal to cultural diversity and democratically unacceptable.

In this context, international cooperation can be more a form of palliative care than prevention and cure, most notably when it neither tackles the root causes of the unbalance between developed and developing countries nor removes the structural obstacles that generate poverty worldwide.

The current tragedy occurring in the Horn of Africa where almost 12,000,000 people are at risk of death due to a combination of drought, rising food prices and conflict, is a clear example of this scenario. Currently, the international community is rightly mobilising to assist those populations with emergency relief, but this tragedy was there already for many years² and its exacerbation could have been prevented if interventions to eliminate the root causes of such a situation would have been put in place earlier.

At the onset of the most recent global economic and financial crisis, governments of wealthy countries were able to raise trillions of dollars in a matter of months to resuscitate ailing banks. Global military spending continued to increase while funds for international cooperation remained static or were reduced. And yet, except for few countries, the majority of States are still far from keeping the promise of giving 0.7% of GNP to Official Development Assistance.

According to the UN Millennium Summit Declaration “the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people [...] Thus, only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable”.

Only the principle of solidarity in connection with the principle of subsidiarity³ can make possible a process of globalization “fully inclusive and equitable”.

There is a great need to rethink global economy and build up an ethical, just, more democratic financial architecture that pursues the common good of humanity. People living in extreme poverty need actions and not words: they have not the luxury to wait, they die. They are people whose human rights are violated – not only the economic, social and cultural rights but also the civil and political rights because extreme poverty and social exclusion impede their exercise.

States are the principal protector of human rights and fundamental freedom within their boundaries, but many developing countries are not in a position to fulfil basic economic, social and cultural rights of their citizens; they often lack the financial resources and the technical capacities to effectively meet their obligations with respect to the economic, social and cultural rights of their citizens. Especially in view of expanding global interdependence, it is imperative to recognize that human rights are a shared responsibility between all members of the international community, States and non-states actors.

To provide the Right to Development with a legal binding framework and/or international and national policies for its implementation, to recognise International Solidarity as a right, to effectively use the monitoring system offered by the indicators for MDG8, will be further

² UNICEF report 2008

³ Subsidiarity is an organising principle that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authority

important steps towards the realisation of a new, more human and responsible social and international order.

Among the States of the United Nations family, there is a broad consensus on recognising the importance of the principle of International Solidarity: some regional groups, such as the European Union, have endorsed solidarity together with subsidiarity as guiding principles on which States act accordingly; the UN General Assembly approved the Declaration on the Right to Development. Nevertheless, when debating the eventual recognition of solidarity as a right, and the implementation, by providing legal bindings instruments, of the right to development, the consensus is infringed, with the developing and emerging countries on one side and the developed countries on the other.

The co-signing NGOs are fully aware that the political debate on these issues is difficult and quite controversial: it implies a harmonisation of significant differences among countries in terms of ideological and cultural point of views, historical backgrounds, political and economic power.

Nevertheless, as NGOs whose members serve and share life with the poor in many countries of the world on daily basis, it is our duty to bring the plea of the poor for a more just world.

In this regard, the co-signing NGOs further support what it is stated in OP7 of the HRC Resolution A/HRC/RES/15/13: “ideally, solidarity should be preventive rather than simply reactive to massive irreversible damage already caused, and must address both natural and man-made disasters”.

In fact, a solidarity that is ante-factum, or preventive, has the potential to address the core need for justice and equity at the national and international levels.

Finally, in terms of enhancement of global partnership, these NGOs would like to invite Member States to consider the proposal of “twinship” forwarded by Mr. Ritzki, the previous Independent Expert on International Solidarity and Human Rights⁴. This idea can imply the creation of a system of strategic partnership between a developed and a developing country which have different but complementary needs and can work together for mutual benefit and outcomes in economic, political, social and humanitarian development. This can be a practical way to achieve MDG8 and implement the Right to Development in the spirit of International Solidarity.

Lastly, the co-signing NGOs fully support the advancement of the debate that leads to a draft declaration of the right of individuals and peoples to International Solidarity, and wish to continue contributing actively to the work of the new Independent Expert on International Solidarity and Human Rights.

⁴ A/HRC/15/32