

## **POSITION OF INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT ATD FOURTH WORLD ON THE OUTCOME DOCUMENT FOR THE UN CONFERENCE ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS**

The Report of the Commission of Experts of the President of the UN General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System affirms that “Reform of the international system must have as its goal the improved functioning of the world’s economic system in support of the global good” (para. 11). It goes on to state that “Both developed and developing countries must recognize that globalization must meet the needs of all citizens of the world” (para. 13).

The Outcome Document therefore calls for efforts to reduce poverty levels and increase the levels of human security. Paragraph 24 states:

“We recognize the various human and social dimensions to the crisis, and our responsibility to address the human security challenges that it has created and exacerbated. Short term measures should be complementary to long term goals, especially those related to environmental protection, food security, clean energy, health and education. We commit to the strengthening of existing social safety nets, protection of social expenditures, and advancement of people-centred development. We reaffirm our commitment to timely achievement of our internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals.”

Paragraph 25 goes on to state:

“We call for additional resources for social protection, food security and human development to be made available through voluntary bilateral contributions to the World Bank’s Vulnerability Financing Framework and similar initiatives. We support the development of a joint UN system-World Bank mechanism for a common articulation and implementation of the Vulnerability Financing Framework.”

However, these paragraphs call for ways to simply mitigate the worst effects of the current economic model, which relies on economic growth. And yet the current crisis, as acknowledged by the Commission of Experts, has demonstrated the need to rethink its objectives and strategies.

**We are concerned that the Outcome Document does not lay an adequate foundation to respond to the crisis.** Based on its extensive experience in working with people living in extreme poverty, **the International Movement ATD Fourth World calls for the inclusion in the “Lines of Action” of two basic principles** that do not pretend to address all the gaps in the Document, but that it believes are critical to an effective long-term response to the series of crises that the world has recently experienced.

### **1. Economic development must have human rights as one of its pillars:**

In resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly, Member States have reaffirmed “that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity”

(A/RES/59/186, 10 March 2005), and have also recognized “the need to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to address the most pressing social needs of people living in poverty.” Poverty reduction requires a multi-pronged approach that goes beyond economic strategies. And yet, nowhere in the outcome document is there a reference to human rights. **The call for a strengthening of human development strategies should include a call for them to be based on a human-rights-based approach to development that will progressively ensure universal access to the means to live in dignity.** This is the only way in which the cycle of poverty for the poorest of the poor can be broken, and that the international economic system will meet “the needs of all citizens of the world”. The strategies should be based on the human rights standards of transparency, accountability, participation and non-discrimination.

## **2. Sustainable long-terms solutions will require the inclusion of all sectors of society:**

The document refers extensively to the actions to be taken by governments and financial institutions, but does not mention the role of civil society. **In order to implement long-term strategies that effectively promote the human development called for in the outcome document, the mobilization of all social actors will be required.** The General Assembly Resolution quoted above *“Also reaffirms* that it is essential for States to foster participation by the poorest people in the decision-making process in the societies in which they live, in the promotion of human rights and in efforts to combat extreme poverty, and that it is essential for people living in poverty and vulnerable groups to be empowered to organize themselves and to participate in all aspects of political, economic and social life, in particular the planning and implementation of policies that affect them, thus enabling them to become genuine partners in development.” The International Movement ATD Fourth World is convinced that the only way to effectively bring an end to the cycle of poverty in which millions of people are entrapped is by establishing partnerships with all sectors of society, including those living in extreme poverty. The latter have experience and insights that can contribute to the development of more effective anti-poverty strategies, and their energy and creativity are vital to the success of these strategies. In ATD’s experience, strategies that do not ensure the inclusion of those at the bottom of the social ladder simply leave them there – at the bottom – to watch hopelessly while others climb higher up the ladder’s rungs.