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The Declaration and Programme of Action for Social Development

The Declaration and Programme of Action are the two major documents produced by the World Summit for Social Development. The following is a summary of those two documents with excerpts prepared by the Bahá'í International Community Office of the Environment and distributed to Bahá'í communities throughout the world.

Vienna, Austria

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The Declaration and *Programme of Action* are the two major documents produced by the World Summit for Social Development. They were signed by most of the nations that attended the Summit - in many cases, it was the Head of State or Government who signed.

The Declaration and *Programme of Action* are important not only for many of the concepts and programmatic recommendations they contain, but also because various ideas they put forward will eventually become part of international law through the practice of states and through referral to them in bilateral and multilateral agreements. These documents focus on the three major goals the Summit set for itself: "to eradicate poverty, to enhance productive employment and reduce unemployment, and to foster social integration."

The Declaration and *Programme of Action* are interdependent and, for all practical purposes, can be viewed as one document. The Programme of Action "outlines policies, actions and measures to implement the principles and fulfill the commitments enunciated in the Declaration adopted by the World Summit for Social Development."

There are many notable ideas put forward in these documents, including the need of ethics and values in "promoting responsibility, solidarity and a strengthened civil society" and for preventing "all forms of corruption and exploitation of individuals, families and groups;" the understanding that development encompasses both the "material and spiritual needs of individuals, their families and communities;" the critical role of the family in social integration; the importance of real participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other institutions of civil society "in the formulation and implementation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of our societies," including the crafting of national strategies/action-plans; the need for equality, equity and partnership between women and men; support for "indigenous people in their pursuit of economic and social development;" the contribution of profit sharing to development; agreement on the goal of eradicating poverty (a first in UN history); recognition that consumption and production patterns are the major contributors to environmental degradation; commitment to ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social goals; the call for "cooperation and interaction among government, the private sector and civil society;" the understanding that "[p]roductive work and employment are central elements of development as well as decisive elements of human identity;" recognition that "[s]ocial integration ... encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies;" and various proposals for educational programmes and media campaigns to promote social integration and social development.

The following excerpts from *The Declaration* and *Programme of Action* are intended to give an indication of the general subject material these historic documents contain. The numbering and wording of the excerpts are based on the final documents as they appeared at the closing of the Summit on 12 March 1995.

The Declaration

The Declaration is divided into a Preamble and three sections:

A. Current social situation and reasons for convening the Summit;
B. Principles and goals; and,
C. Commitments (ten).

It is written from the perspective and voice of the Heads of State and Government.

The following are some of the salient points from the Declaration.

Preamble

3. "We acknowledge that our societies must respond more effectively to the material and spiritual needs of individuals, their families and the communities in which they live throughout our diverse countries and regions."

5. "... social development and social justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and among our nations."

6. "... broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice."

7. "We recognize, therefore, that social development is central to the needs and aspirations of people throughout the world and to the responsibilities of Governments and all sectors of civil society... and ... that social and economic development cannot be secured in a sustainable way without the full participation of women and that equality and equity between women and men is a priority for the international community and as such must be at the centre of economic and social development."

9. "... so that all men and women ... may exercise the rights, utilize the resources and share the responsibilities that enable them to lead satisfying lives and to contribute to the well-being of their families, their communities and humankind."

Current social situation and reasons for convening the Summit

15 d). "The major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances."

20. "The goals and objectives of social development require continuous efforts to reduce and eliminate major sources of social distress and instability for the family and for society ... Among these conditions are chronic hunger, malnutrition, illicit drug problems, organized crime, corruption, foreign occupation, armed conflicts, illicit arms trafficking, terrorism, intolerance and incitement to racial, ethnic, religious and other hatreds, xenophobia, and endemic, communicable and chronic diseases."

21. "... the negative impact on development of excessive military expenditures, arms trade and investment for arms production and acquisition..."

Principles and goals

25. "We Heads of State and Government are committed to a political, economic, ethical and spiritual vision for social development based on human dignity, human rights, equality, respect, peace, democracy, mutual responsibility and cooperation, and full respect for the various religious, and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of people. Accordingly, we will give the highest priority in national, regional and international policies and actions to the promotion of social progress, justice and the betterment of the human condition, based on full participation by all."

26 j). "Promote universal respect for, and observance and protection of, all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the right to development; promote the effective exercise of rights and the discharge of responsibilities at all levels of society; promote equality and equity between women and men; protect the rights of children and youth; and promote the strengthening of social integration and civil society;"

26 m). "Recognize and support indigenous people in their pursuit of economic and social development with full respect for their identity, traditions, forms of social organization and cultural values;"

26 o). ".... Empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of our societies;"

27. "We invite all people to express their personal commitment to enhancing the human condition through concrete actions in their own fields of activities and through assuming specific civic responsibilities."

Commitments

The ten commitments in this section focus on

1. an enabling economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment for social development;
2. the goal of eradicating poverty;
3. the goal of full employment;
4. the promotion of social integration;
5. the achievement of equality and equity between women and men;
6. education;
7. accelerating the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries;
8. ensuring that structural adjustment programmes include social goals;
9. increasing significantly and/or utilizing more efficiently resources allocated to social development; and,
10. an improved and strengthened framework for international, regional and subregional cooperation for social development.

Commitment 1:

(a) "Provide a stable legal framework... which includes and promotes equality and equity between women and men, full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, access to justice, elimination of all forms of discrimination, transparent and accountable governance and administration and the encouragement of partnership with free and representative organizations of civil society;"

(d) "Reinforce peace by promoting tolerance, non-violence and respect for diversity, and by settling of dispute by peaceful means;"

Commitment 2:

"We commit ourselves to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world..."

Commitment 3:

"We commit ourselves to promoting the goal of full employment..."

Commitment 4:

"We commit ourselves to promoting social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, and on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people..."

(a)"Promote respect for democracy, the rule of law, pluralism and diversity, tolerance and responsibility, non-violence and solidarity by encouraging educational systems and communication media and local communities and organizations to raise people's understanding and awareness of all aspects of social integration;"

(b)"Formulate or strengthen policies and strategies geared to the elimination of discrimination in all its forms and the achievement of social integration based on equality and respect for human dignity;"

(e) "Formulate or strengthen measures to ensure respect for, and protection of, the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families, to eliminate the increasing acts of racism and xenophobia ... and to promote greater harmony and tolerance in all societies;"

(k) "Strengthen institutions that enhance social integration, recognizing the central role of the family..."

Commitment 5:

"We commit ourselves to promoting full respect for human dignity and to achieving equality and equity between women and men, and to recognizing and enhancing the participation and leadership roles of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life and in development."

(g) "Promote equal partnership between women and men in family and community life and society...."

Commitment 6:

"We commit ourselves to promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education ..."

b) "Emphasize lifelong learning .... to ensure that people of all ages are provided with useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills and ethical and social values required to develop their full capacities .... In this regard, women and girls should be considered a priority group;"

j) "Develop broad-based education programmes that promote and strengthen respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, promote the values of tolerance, responsibility and respect for the diversity and rights of others, and provide training in peaceful conflict resolution, in recognition of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995 - 2005);"

k) "... strengthen partnerships among Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups and families to achieve the goal of education for all;"

r) "Promote ... awareness of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production."

t) "Recognize the importance of the cultural dimension of development to ensure respect for cultural diversity and that of our common human cultural heritage. Creativity should be recognized and promoted;"

Commitment 7

"We commit ourselves to accelerating the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries."

Commitment 8:

"We commit ourselves to ensuring that when structural adjustment programmes are agreed to, they include social development goals, in particular eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment and enhancing social integration."

Commitment 9:

"We commit ourselves to increase significantly and/or utilize more efficiently the resources allocated to social development in order to achieve the goals of the Summit..."

(g) "... through the appropriate reduction of excessive military expenditures, including global military expenditures and arms trade, and investments for arms production and acquisition ..."

Commitment 10:

"We commit ourselves to an improved and strengthened framework for international, regional and subregional cooperation for social development ..."

The Programme of Action

The *Programme of Action* "outlines policies, actions and measures to implement the principles and fulfill the commitments enunciated in the Declaration adopted by the World Summit for Social Development."

It is divided into a Preamble and five Chapters:

  I. An Enabling Environment for Social Development;
 II. Eradication of Poverty;
III. The Expansion of Productive Employment and the Reduction of Unemployment;
 IV. Social Integration;
  V. and, Implementation and Follow-up.

Each chapter contains two major sections, "Basis for Action" and "Objectives, and Actions."

The following are some of the salient points from the *Programme of Action*.

Preamble

2. "Actions ... to eradicate poverty, to enhance productive employment and reduce unemployment, and to foster social integration. All the recommended actions are linked, either in the requirements for their design, including the participation of all concerned, or in their consequences for the various facets of the human condition. Policies to eradicate poverty and reduce disparities and combat social exclusion require the creation of employment opportunities and would be incomplete and ineffective without measures to eliminate discrimination and promote participation and harmonious social relationships among groups and nations.... Social integration, or the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life, encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies.... It also calls for the full involvement of both the State and civil society."

3. "The special importance of the *Programme of Action* lies in its integrated approach and its attempt to combine many different actions for poverty eradication, employment creation and social integration in coherent national and international strategies for social development... The outcomes of relevant international conferences should also be duly taken into account in the implementation of the present *Programme of Action*."

Chapter I. An Enabling Environment for Social Development

4. "Social development is inseparable from the cultural, ecological, economic, political and spiritual environment in which it takes place. It cannot be pursued as a sectorial initiative. Social development is also clearly linked to the development of peace, freedom, stability and security, both nationally and internationally. To promote social development requires an orientation of values, objectives and priorities towards the well-being of all and the strengthening and promotion of conducive institutions and policies. Human dignity, all human rights and fundamental freedoms, equality, equity and social justice constitute the fundamental values of all societies."

5. "The economies and societies of the world are becoming increasingly interdependent."

6. "Economic... growth should promote equity and social justice, tolerance, responsibility and involvement."

7. "The ultimate goal of social development is to improve and enhance the quality of life of all people. It requires democratic institutions, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, increased and equal economic opportunities, the rule of law, promotion of respect for cultural diversity and rights of persons belonging to minorities and an active involvement of the civil society. Empowerment and participation are essential for democracy, harmony and social development... Gender equality and equity and the full participation of women in all economic, social and political activities is essential... an equitable partnership between men and women ... involving men's full

responsibility in family life. It is necessary to change the prevailing social paradigm of gender to usher in a new generation of women and men working together to create a more humane world order."

8. "Broad based participation and involvement of civil society in the formulation and implementation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of our societies... Public policies that seek to overcome socially divisive disparities and that respect pluralism and diversity... A supportive and stable political and legal framework that promotes the mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy, development and all human rights and fundamental freedoms; Political and social processes that avoid exclusion while respecting pluralism and diversity, including religious and cultural diversity; a strengthened role for the family... Increased solidarity, partnership and cooperation at all levels..."

9 j). "Ensuring that, in accordance with Agenda 21 ... respects the need to protect the environment and the interests of future generations..."

10 c). "Changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns, taking into account that the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances..."

13 a). "Enacting rules and regulations and creating a moral and ethical climate that prevents all forms of corruption and exploitation of individuals, families and groups;"

13 b). "Promoting fair competition and ethical responsibility in business activities and enhancing cooperation and interaction among Government, the private sector and civil society;"

14 b). "Ensuring the rule of law and democracy and the existence of rules and processes to create transparency and accountability for all public and private institutions and to prevent and combat all forms of corruption, sustained through education and the development of attitudes and values promoting responsibility, solidarity and a strengthened civil society;"

14 c). "Eliminating all forms of discrimination, while developing and encouraging educational programmes and media campaigns to that end;"

14 i). "Ensuring full involvement and participation of women at all levels in the decision-making and implementation process, and in the economic and political mechanisms through which policies are formulated and implemented;"

15 a). "Encouraging ratification of existing international human rights conventions that have not been ratified; and implementing the provisions of conventions and covenants that have been ratified;"

15 j). "Strengthening the ability of civil society and the community to participate actively in the planning, decision-making and implementation of social development programmes, by education and access to resources;"

16 a). "Strengthening the educational system at all levels, as well as other means of acquiring skills and knowledge, and ensuring universal access to basic education and lifelong educational opportunities..."

16 b). "Raising public awareness and promoting gender- sensitivity education to eliminate all obstacles to full gender equality and equity;"

16 c). "Enabling and encouraging access by all to a wide range of information and opinion on matters of general interest through the mass media and other means;"

16 d). "Encouraging education systems and ... communication media to raise people's understanding and awareness of all aspects of social integration, including gender sensitivity, non-violence, tolerance and solidarity and respect for the diversity of cultures and interests, and to discourage the exhibition of pornography and the gratuitous depiction of explicit violence and cruelty in the media;"

Chapter II. Eradication of Poverty

20. "There is general agreement that persistent widespread poverty, as well as serious social and gender inequities, have significant influences on, and are in turn influenced by, demographic parameters such as population growth, structure and distribution. There is also general agreement that unsustainable consumption and production patterns are contributing to the unsustainable use of natural resources and environmental degradation, as well as to the reinforcement of social inequities and poverty, with the above-mentioned consequences for demographic parameters."

28, 28 a). "People living in poverty and their organizations should be empowered by: a) Involving them fully in the setting of targets and in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of national strategies and programmes for poverty eradication and community-based development..."

39 d). "Taking the necessary legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect and promote the rights of the child, with particular attention to the girl child;"

Chapter III. The expansion of Productive Employment and the Reduction of Unemployment

42. "Productive work and employment are central elements of development as well as decisive elements of human identity."

47. "Placing the creation of employment at the centre of national strategies and policies, with the full participation of employers and trade unions and other parts of civil society;"

52 b). "Introducing new and revitalized partnerships between education and other government departments, including labour, and communications and partnerships between Governments and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups and families;"

54 f). "... to consider ways and means for enhancing the sharing of workers in the profits of enterprises and promoting cooperation between workers and employers in the decisions of enterprises."

56 e). "Encouraging men to take an active part in all areas of family and household responsibilities, including the sharing of child-rearing and housework."

Chapter IV. Social Integration

66. "The aim of social integration is to create 'a society for all', where every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. Such an inclusive society must be based upon respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, cultural and religious diversity, social justice and the special needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, democratic participation and the rule of law."

67. "... an expanded notion of collective responsibility for all members of a society;"

69. "... to foster social cohesion while recognizing, protecting and valuing diversity."

70. "There is therefore an urgent need for... Strengthen the participation and involvement of civil society in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of their societies; Maintenance of social stability and promotion of social justice and progress; Promotion of non-discrimination, tolerance and mutual respect for and value of diversity; Equity and equality of opportunity and social mobility; Gender equality and equity and empowerment of women... Promoting the principle of caring for each other's well- being and fostering the spirit of mutual support, within the context of human rights education... the negative effect of excessive military expenditures, trade in arms, especially of those arms that are particularly injurious or have indiscriminate effects, and an excessive investment for arms production and acquisition should be recognized and addressed. Similarly, the need to combat illicit arms trafficking, violence, crime, the production, use and trafficking of illicit drugs, and trafficking in women and children; should be recognized;"

71 i). "Encouraging the ratification, the avoidance as far as possible of the resort to reservations and the implementation of international human rights instruments aiming to eliminate barriers to the full enjoyment of all human rights."

72 b) "Enabling institutions of civil society ... to participate in the formulation, on a consultative basis, implementation and evaluation of policies related to social development;"

73, 73 a, b, d, h, i, k) "Eliminating discrimination and promoting tolerance and mutual respect for and the value of diversity at the national and international levels requires:
a) Enacting and implementing appropriate laws and other regulations to combat racism, racial discrimination, religious intolerance in all its various forms, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination in all walks of life in societies;
b) Encouraging the early ratification of, and considering the removal or limitation of reservations to and the implementation of international instruments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women...
h) Setting an example through State institutions and the educational system to promote and protect respect for freedom of expression; democracy; political pluralism; diversity of heritage, cultures and values; religious tolerance and principles; and the national traditions on which a country has been built;
i) recognizing that the languages spoken or used in the world should be respected and protected...
k) Encouraging independent communication media that promote people's understanding and awareness of all aspects of social integration with full respect for freedom of information and expression."

77 b). "... Governments of receiving countries must ensure the protection of migrants and their families, giving priority to programmes and strategies that combat religious intolerance, racism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia and gender discrimination, and that generate the necessary public sensitivity in that regard;"

77 d). "Governments should encourage interracial harmony and cross-cultural understanding through educational programmes, where appropriate, including alternative dispute resolution and conflict prevention training in schools."

80. "The family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support... Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses, and husband and wife should be equal partners."

81 b). "Ensuring opportunities for family members to understand and meet their social responsibilities;"

81 c). "Promoting mutual respect, tolerance and cooperation within the family and within society;"

81 d). "Promoting equal partnership between women and men in the family."

Chapter V. Implementation and Follow-up

82. Nothing short of a renewed and massive political will at the national and international levels to invest in people and their well-being will achieve the objectives of social development... At all levels of implementation, the crucial and essential requirements are: The promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the support for democratic institutions and the empowerment of women... Partnership involving States, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, especially voluntary organizations, other major groups as defined in Agenda 21, the media, families and individuals... empowerment of people, who are to be assisted so that they fully participate in setting goals, designing programs, implementing activities and evaluating performance; Efforts to mobilize new and additional financial resources ... in a way that ... uses all available funding sources and mechanisms, inter alia, multilateral, bilateral and private sources, including on concessional and grant terms; Solidarity, extending the concept of partnership and a moral imperative of mutual respect and concern among individuals, communities and nations."

83 -- chapeau. "National strategies, evaluations and reviews"

83 h). "Developing quantitative and qualitative indicators of social development, including, where possible, disaggregation by gender, to assess poverty, employment, social integration and other social factors, to monitor the impact of social policies and programmes, and to find ways to improve the effectiveness of policies and programmes and introduce new programmes;"

83 i). "Strengthening implementation and monitoring mechanisms, including arrangements for the participation of civil society in policy-making and implementation and collaboration with international organizations;"

85 b). "Establishing legislative and regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements and consultative mechanisms for involving such organizations in the design, implementation and evaluation of social development strategies and programmes;"

86 g). "Encouraging educational institutions, the media and other sources of public information and opinion to give special prominence to the challenges of social development and to facilitate widespread and well-informed debate about social policies throughout the community."

90. "Substantial debt reduction is needed to enable developing countries to implement the Declaration and the *Programme of Action*."

93. "... to consider new and innovative ideas for generating funds and to offer for this purpose any useful suggestions."

100. "The support and the participation of major groups as defined in Agenda 21 are essential to the success of the implementation of the Programme of Action. To ensure the commitment of these groups, they must be involved in the planning, elaboration, implementation and evaluation at both the national and the international levels. To this end, mechanisms are needed to support, promote and allow their effective participation in all relevant United Nations bodies, including the mechanisms responsible for reviewing the implementation of the *Programme of Action*."

The Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í Faith