

## Position Paper for the Economic and Social Council Committee

The issues before the Economic and Social Council Committee are: Long Term Sustainable Development Plan for Disaster Risk Countries, and Reinvigorating Africa towards Peace-Building and Recovery through Inclusivity and Youth Involvement. The Portuguese Republic is determined in addressing each issue through sustainable development plans, capacity-building measures, and international cooperation.

## I. Long Term Sustainable Development Plan for Disaster Risk Countries

The ability of people and places to withstand disaster impacts and recover quickly remains possible. Sustainable development, described as the utilization of the resources of the present generation without compromising the resources of the future generations, consists of three pillars that serve as the guiding principle to long-term global development: social justice, economic growth and ecological protection. The Rio+20 Conference, held last June 2012, pursued an institutional framework for sustainable development, seeking the establishment of the framework in a grassroots level. As disasters continue to ravage and leave the international community in peril, the continued efforts to resilience have yet to be improved.

The Portuguese Republic has implemented dialogues between authorities to enhance multi-stakeholder collaboration to disaster reduction. The Portuguese National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, established in May 2010, integrates representatives from public administration, private and academic sectors and the local level, under the coordination of a government representative. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) has adopted the Sendai Framework last March 2015, a 15-year plan to mitigate disaster risks worldwide. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution 70/1 last September 2015 to establish the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, putting forth the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goal to Decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), Climate action (Goal 13), and Peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16) are among other goals that focus on the pillars of sustainable development.

The Portuguese Republic recognizes the importance of a comprehensive strategy that entails sustainable development during the occurrence of disasters. Portugal supports a grassroots level approach in achieving the following: a) instigation of climate change-related disasters and risk information such as disaster preparedness and resilience in all education levels and the continuation of best practices imposed by Making Cities Resilient Campaign by the UNISDR; b) involvement of local sectors through the strengthening of disaster risk governance by the inclusion of national platforms; c) implementation of national disaster risk assessment regionally for consolidation of information as basis for evaluation that need to be taken into consideration and be given special attention; d) investment of risk prevention infrastructure and measures such as but not limited to food insecurity issues in the course of climate change-related disasters; e) financial support from international financial institutions such as multilateral development banks. The Portuguese Republic is determined to play an active role in the contribution of each Member State to build and integrate a culture of safety and resilience, to strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response in all levels.

## II. Reinvigorating Africa towards Peace-Building and Recovery through Inclusivity and Youth Involvement

A nation living in constant fear of their lives, of the possibility of encountering danger outside of their homes, is a nation immune to unwilling and forced transformation. The growing threat to Africa by epidemics such as the Ebola outbreak and transnational crimes such as terrorist attacks of Boko Haram

among others are factors of the diminishing economic growth of the region. The World Health Organization (WHO) have declared West Africa Ebola-free but according to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) study on the socio-economic impact of the crisis last October 2014, West Africa is impairing the ability of governments to raise revenues, increasing their exposure to domestic and foreign debts that make them depend more on aid. In a World Bank survey conducted last 2011, 40% of unemployed youth are motivated to join rebel groups caused by lack of jobs. Africa's youth population will greatly impact the region's economic growth if the youth unemployment rate does not decrease, according to the African Development Bank (AfDB). The contribution of the youth may be a defining factor in the eradication of attacks and international debts resulting to the re-establishment of the region's steady development.

The Portuguese Republic has sent volunteer missionaries through Project Life in the poorest states in Africa as well as Portuguese-speaking states in 2014. Short-term projects address immediate needs of the poor while long-term projects focused on education and social services. African leaders declared 2009-2018 the African Youth Decade dedicated to the creation of safe, decent and competitive employment opportunities for young people. The African Union (AU) created national youth services and empowerment programs, developed a plan to encourage technical and vocational education for young people, introduced a national youth policy and a youth enterprise fund to stimulate job creation, and skills acquisition and enterprise development program as a component of the existing national youth service corps. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution 70/127 stating the policies and programs involving youth, and the significance of youth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations System Wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP) focuses primarily on activities carried out by the UN system entities in the field of youth that caters to employment, protection of rights, political inclusion, education, and health, established from a similar program in the UN, focused on the development of youth policy and activities at the national level, entitled World Programme of Action of Youth (WPAY).

The Portuguese Republic commits to developing projects that give importance to the youth's health, education, professional training and humanitarian relief. Portugal is engaged in promoting and supporting voluntary work overseas and across the country. The following plans of action to be served by these volunteers are: a) helping women entrepreneurs seize the market that would be a stepping stone to launching their own agribusiness in the future by offering technical support by Portuguese volunteers; b) enabling income-generation by closing systemic gaps in health care through raising awareness about family planning, contraception techniques, and other reproductive health issues; c) creating a path from self-sufficiency to ambitious entrepreneurship through offering grants, loans, lessons on handicraft resulting on the creation of small-scale businesses; d) formalizing real-world learning in the creative arts by means of certificate-level courses such as basic computer skills, photography, video production, web design, and visual effects and; e) putting the marginalized, particularly inmates and rebel group members, back to work by introducing them to entrepreneurship programming. The Portuguese Republic encourages the involvement of the youth in voicing out these proposals, recognizing the efforts put in placing each youth to a sustainable future ahead. Portugal expresses its hope in building the next generation of leaders through the active participation of youth in all sectors and in the global community.