



Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd

Oral Statement

54th Session of the Commission for Social Development

Inequality Matters

Inequality matters! Social justice was one of the foundational principals of the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. Achieving people-centered development, full employment and decent work, stable, safe and just societies, and ending poverty were the goals then as they are today. While advances have been made in the past 20 years, inequalities within and among countries have arisen obstructing social and sustainable development. Exploitative practices and behaviors create unsustainable situations for people and the planet.

The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd have a documentary film entitled, *Maisha - A New Life Outside the Mines*, set in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which showcases a collaborative grassroots project in action where individuals and the community have become empowered and engaged with local government. It shows the Sustainable Development Goals in action, and demonstrates what is possible despite exploitative mining practices which enrich a few at the expense of many – giving rise to and reinforcing poverty, gender inequality, illiteracy, food insecurity, and unsustainable production and consumption models.

How might the scenario be different if in the first instance macroeconomic policy had been aligned with people-centered, social, and environmental goals? Even today, how can the empowered people of the *Maisha* documentary move towards participation in decision-making in all that affects the life of the community?

The Secretary General's report 'Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world' calls for the integration of social and environmental policies into macroeconomic policy frameworks. Unfortunately, this type of integration would continue to reinforce a paradigm which through the dominance of the economic order over the social and the environmental has been exploitative and continues to prioritize profit at all costs to the neglect of and even impoverishment of people and the destruction of the planet.

To be truly transformative, macroeconomic policies should reflect the social and environmental principles and the values central to social justice, gender justice and environmental justice. Devising criteria against which all policy is evaluated is key to the paradigm shift called for, if the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to be successful and transformational. All of the criteria are well known to us. Is every policy - person centered, human rights based, and sustainable ensuring the wellbeing of each person? 'Leaving no one behind' demands such criteria and ensures the creation of a more just and equitable world. Inequality matters!