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REFERENCE: RRDD/RTDU/SF

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Subject: The 2008 Social Forum of the Human Rights Council

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) would like to refer to Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution 6/13 entitled “The Social Forum” in which the Council decided “to preserve the Social Forum as a unique space for interactive dialogue between the United Nations human rights machinery and various stakeholders, including grass-roots organizations.”

The same resolution requested “the President of the Human Rights Council to appoint, before the end of 2007, from candidates nominated by regional groups, the Chairperson-Rapporteur for the 2008 Social Forum” and invited “the appointed Chairperson-Rapporteur to announce, in a timely manner, the most appropriate dates for convening the 2008 Social Forum, after holding consultations with United Nations Member States and other stakeholders.”

In December 2007, the President of the HRC appointed H.E. Mr. Mousa Burayzat, Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations Office in Geneva as the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the 2008 Social Forum. The Chairperson-Rapporteur, after consultations, announced 1-3 September 2008 as dates of the 2008 Social Forum.

After consultation with the Chairperson-Rapporteur and pursuant to paragraph 8 of HRC resolution 6/13, the OHCHR would like to invite input from all stakeholders on the issues identified in paragraph 4 of the said resolution, namely:

- “(a) Questions relating to the eradication of poverty in the context of human rights;
- (b) Capturing best practices in the fight against poverty in the light of grass-roots presentations to the Social Forum;
- (c) Social dimension of the globalization process.”

Mandate holders of thematic procedures and mechanisms of the UN human rights machinery, UN human rights treaty-monitoring bodies, inter-governmental organizations, UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations



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In the above context, reference is made to paragraph 5 of the resolution by which the Council decided that the Social Forum will meet for three working days in order that it may devote:

“(a) One day to thematic discussions on poverty and human rights and the work of the international human rights mechanisms in the field of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development in relation to poverty, in order to receive feedback from civil society to provide to different mechanisms;

(b) One day to discussion on the social dimension of the globalization process;

(c) One day to an interactive debate with relevant thematic procedure holders of the Human Rights Council on issues related to the topics of the Social Forum, and to formulating conclusions and recommendations to be presented to relevant bodies through the Human Rights Council.”

In this connection, we would like to solicit concrete ideas and suggestions including in particular from UN agencies/departments, NGOs, and donors that deal directly with the poor and poverty reduction, on the following:

- i) How best the Forum can be utilized to move forward the intended purposes of HRC resolution 6/13, namely the eradication of poverty in the context of human rights;
- ii) The specific themes the Social Forum should focus on to address the social dimension of the globalization process, during the 2008 Forum and beyond.

The OHCHR would like to request that this invitation is shared, as appropriate, with all stakeholders referred to in paragraph 10 of HRC resolution 6/13, especially “newly emerging actors such as small groups and rural and urban associations from the North and the South, anti-poverty groups, peasants’ and farmers’ organizations and their national and international associations, voluntary organizations, youth associations, community organizations, trade unions and associations of workers, as well as representatives of the private sector, regional banks, and other financial institutions and international development agencies” whose work and perspective would be most beneficial to the work of the Forum.

Submissions, not exceeding three pages, should be sent at the latest by 11 July 2008 to the Secretariat of the Social Forum via fax + 41 22 928 9010 or e-mail: socialforum@ohchr.org

Based on information received, invitations will be extended, as appropriate, to representatives from different regions. The United Nations will not bear the cost of the participation of the invited representatives in the Forum.

Information on the 2008 Social Forum and the previous sessions of the Social Forum is available on the OHCHR website (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/poverty/sforum.htm>).