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“Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promote rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development”

### Statement submitted by Oasis Open City Foundation (FOCA), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the ECOSOC

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 35 July 1996.

The present report includes recommendations related to the theme of the Coordinated Segment to strengthen rural service center, including institutions and mechanisms for local and regional planning, as endorsed by the ECOSOC in July 2003. The Forum was organized by FOCA in participation with national and international, State and Federal authorities, Municipalities, universities, practitioners and organizations of civil society in fulfilment of the Open City concept. Through this Forum a Brasilia Declaration was adopted and focused on the role of civil society in sustaining rural development, improving agricultural productivity and achieving the 7<sup>th</sup> Millennium Development Goal.

## BRASILIA DECLARATION

- The need for more territorial coordination for rural sectoral policies at all Governmental levels, in order to ensure coherence and synergy in their implementation. This involves a more adapted and updated institutional approach to sustainable development .
- Sustainable rural development is strongly dependent on good working relationships among several components: economic, cultural, social, and environmental.
- Often the intangible resources of an area – such as know-how, culture and local identity – are vital for mobilizing the tangible resources – such as infrastructure or natural resources.
- Good governance meaning democratic and participative public management was identified as a critical factor for achieving development goals. Without transparency, accountability, and participatory processes, the credibility of new actions or programs will likely be challenged by the public, and efforts to attract new investments will be thwarted.
- The local Agenda 21 articulated in various networks and coordinated at all government levels can be an important entry point for smaller municipalities to be connected to global concerns. Genuine empowerment is necessary for municipalities to implement the Agenda 21 objectives and the Millennium Development Goals, in particular in relation to poverty eradication, health care, basic education, and environmental protection.
- In this world of globalization there is a need for networking among all stakeholders to exchange ideas and best practices to improve municipal decision-making. Information and communication technologies in a comprehensive manner can provide important tools to increase cooperation among municipalities and citizens, moving from “ individual to territorial and from solitary to solidarity.”
- The potentials of agro-ecological approaches that utilize maximally the biological potentials of plants, animals and microorganisms, and minimize dependence on chemical inputs, offer some important new possibilities for improving agricultural production in low-cost , ecologically-benign and socially sustainable ways.
- It is important for all actors to be educated about the issues involved in mobilizing resources, knowledge, and finances having access to all and suitable sources of information. More often than not resources such as know-how, creativity, a managerial and planning culture are as much important as financial resources.
- Sustainable development depends both on the existence of infrastructures for delivering basic services to people and on the efficiency of economic activities.

- Rural issues cannot be separated from urban issues. Rural areas fall along a continuum from remote rural communities to urban agglomerations; therefore optimal strategies for sustainable economical development will depend highly on territorial location and on a systematic capitalization on synergies among urban and rural populations.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Territorial coordination of sectoral policies affecting rural development has to be implemented within national, regional and local government .
2. Governments should promote and support collaborative partnerships among civil society, intergovernmental organizations, academia, and the private sector that are focused on the implementation of more integrated rural development .
3. Independently of people's educational levels, formal and concrete instruments for ensuring their participation in local development decision-making and implementation have to be provided for.
4. A juridical framework is necessary to buttress the integrated management of territorial pacts promoted by local actors following a bottom-up approach.
5. It is necessary to adopt a methodology for the identification in each territory of the minimum level of tangible resources allowing the utilization of intangible resources in a creative manner targeted for each municipality or group of municipalities.
6. Agro-ecological processes and techniques should be identified, promoted and supported for utilizing the potential of plants, microorganisms and animals. The model of monoculture which is dependent on chemical additives and generates social exclusion has in many places reached the point of diminishing returns so new models are needed.
7. Multidisciplinary technical advisory services should be made available to municipalities for opening up access to externally available resources.
8. The implementation, systematization and dissemination of meaningful experiences of existing educational models suited to living conditions in rural areas should be promoted and supported.
9. Rural cooperatives and other forms of solidarity collaboration and associations connecting households and local producers to globalized markets should be promoted and supported. These aim to protect , empower and expand local cultural and ethical values so as to correct imbalances brought about by the efficiency demands of global competition.
10. It is necessary to keep a clear focus on local-level action and on the benefits that accrue at the municipality and household levels in order to concert efforts and to ensure that concrete initiatives with actual results are undertaken. There is much interest in knowing how rural communities enter into more rapid,

sustainable “paths” to rural development , and further research needs to be undertaken to identify these paths.

11. Monitoring and auditing methods are needed with appropriate indicators developed for assisting municipal authorities in tracking progress towards sustainable development , and adjusting policies accordingly.

12. In the rural teaching system needs education focused on cross-cutting practices for enhancing sustainability.

13. Kindergartens where children from 0 to 6 years can stay all day long and where they are guaranteed human development while parents have the possibility to work are needed to promote conditions of gender equity and integration to social programs.

14. Ecotourism and other non-agricultural activities as well as the valorization of local culture should be developed to support social integration, appropriately financed at all levels.

15. Non- formal and continuing education should be strengthened through community learning centers, especially in remote areas where the formal education system is weak.

16. To implement programs of health education aimed at improving home care for all rural families and, in particular to develop initiatives and projects to protect the rights of people with disabilities promoting their integration and participation in socio economic activities.

17. Agro- industry networks should be formed by agriculture households and organized in association with producers and cooperatives to maximize the added value of local products.

18. Public policies should aim to improve the quality of life in rural settings so as to enable rural people to stay in their places and make a decent living based on their work integrated with external economies through a system of infrastructure.

19. Housing policies should be implemented out that give families in rural areas an opportunity to live more comfortably and satisfactorily through special credit lines and funding with debt services conditions suitable to the borrowers income.

20. Public policy instruments should be devised on behalf of rural producer organizations in order to give them better access to international markets.

21. Through specific investment , basic technological infrastructures can be provided for municipalities to gain access to exchanges of information, know how and best practices.

22. Creating geographical concentrations of interdependent, complementary, diversified activities with common infrastructures will build on linkages and

relationships that integrate the isolated capabilities. These geographical concentrations (clusters) have to form the object of specific structural policies and programs implemented by the joint action of states, regions, municipalities, industry, NGOs and development agencies.

23. Municipalities should be provided with instruments and tools for benchmarking, self evaluation and certification of their abilities to attain objectives as well as the capability to measure their present and future performance. This will promote development and quality of life in peripheral or underdevelopment areas. These decision-making tools should represent a guide for control, management and governance to meet future challenges by the democratically elected local authorities.

24. FOCA be mandated to follow up on the above recommendations to become the agent and vehicle to liaise and network both at the national and international levels to implement this Brasilia Declaration in Rural Municipal Sustainability. A Commission renewable each year should be established with representatives of the organizations that will be supporting a permanent Forum with the commitment to cooperate with FOCA and foster all liaisons and networking initiatives aimed to implement The Brasilia declaration and for the organization of an evaluating Forum within one year.