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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement submitted by Shanghai Songding Social Innovation Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[14 August 2026]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Cultural Empowerment Through the Future Media Practitioners Programme: Advancing Decent Work and Cultural Rights for Persons with Disabilities and Marginalized Groups

I. Background and Legal Framework

Agenda item 3 of the United Nations Human Rights Council focuses on advancing economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights explicitly enshrines the right of everyone to take part in cultural life, as well as the right to decent work under just and favourable working conditions. In the digital age, persons with disabilities, youth from low-income households and other marginalized groups still face dual barriers: their access to channels for public cultural expression remains limited, and their right to equal participation in cultural life is not fully guaranteed. Meanwhile, digital employment presents barriers in skills, accessibility and social perception. Employment opportunities in new digital sectors such as short video production, live streaming and new media e-commerce remain insufficiently open to vulnerable groups, posing practical obstacles to social inclusion. The coordinated realization of digital cultural rights and decent work is a key manifestation of the right to development at the grassroots level.

Shanghai Songding Social Welfare Innovation and Development Center, a civil society organization with special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, has long operated the Future Media Practitioners Training Camp, which builds digital media capacity among youth, particularly young persons with disabilities and youth from low-income families. All activity records, trainee outputs and practical training cases of the programme are published on the organization's official channels and are publicly verifiable. Centred on cultural empowerment, the programme integrates media skills training, support for public expression and digital employment assistance to advance both the right to cultural participation and the right to decent work for marginalized groups. Its practice is highly aligned with the objectives of Agenda item 3 of the Human Rights Council.

II. Core Practices of the Programme

The programme adopts a four-tier empowerment framework of general literacy training, hands-on practical training, platform linkage and employment support, and offers free training places to young persons with disabilities and low-income youth to remove barriers arising from financial cost and physical conditions.

First, it provides tiered and accessible media courses tailored to diverse needs. The curriculum is optimized for the differentiated needs of young persons with disabilities, covering practical modules such as short video creation, live streaming operations and new media e-commerce planning. Accessibility support including subtitles, recorded lectures and one-on-one tutoring is provided to lower learning barriers. Beyond technical skills, the curriculum incorporates training on public welfare communication and social issue expression, enabling trainees to tell their own life stories and community cultural narratives through visual media and strengthening their capacity for cultural participation.

Second, it builds real-world training scenarios to uphold the right to cultural expression. In partnership with local converged media centres, public welfare competitions and community events, the programme provides authentic creation opportunities for trainees. Participating youth work as media creators to conduct documentary filming and record community culture. Outstanding short videos and graphic works are published on official new media platforms, enabling persons with disabilities to shift from being subjects of media coverage to agents of public narrative and challenging social stereotypes.

Third, it links digital platforms to employment and income-generating opportunities. The programme partners with new media enterprises, public welfare institutions and e-commerce

platforms to recommend full-time and flexible employment positions such as content creation, live streaming assistance and e-commerce operations for graduates. It also supports trainees in running their own social media accounts to generate income, translating media skills into labour earnings and advancing the realization of the right to decent work. Some trainees combine their work with documentation of intangible cultural heritage and community public welfare, integrating employment practice with local cultural transmission.

Fourth, it documents practical cases to promote knowledge sharing. After each training camp, the organization compiles trainee growth stories and training outcomes for public release, sharing the media empowerment model with domestic civil society organizations and raising broader awareness of digital cultural employment for young persons with disabilities.

III. Outcomes and Human Rights Impact

First, the programme expands pathways for cultural participation by marginalized groups. A significant number of young persons with disabilities and low-income youth have completed systematic training and produced a large body of documentary and cultural content for public dissemination, providing stable channels for public cultural expression and effectively exercising their right to cultural participation.

Second, it opens pathways to decent work in the digital era. A cohort of trainees have secured flexible employment and increased their income. Leveraging digital business models, they have broken down physical and perceptual barriers that persons with disabilities traditionally face in the labour market, demonstrating that digital media can serve as an important vehicle for decent work among vulnerable groups.

Third, it fosters greater social inclusion. Authentic narratives created independently by trainees showcase the capacities and aspirations of persons with disabilities to the public, mitigating social prejudice and promoting wider recognition of their cultural rights and employment rights.

Fourth, it generates a localized and replicable practice model. The programme has developed curricula and training procedures adapted to local contexts, which can be referenced by civil society organizations and provide a practical sample from Chinese civil society for the global advancement of cultural rights and decent work under Agenda item 3.

IV. Existing Challenges and Policy Recommendations

Practical experience reveals persistent structural barriers at the global level. First, there is an insufficient supply of digital media training resources for persons with disabilities, and most training programmes lack accessibility design. Second, digital platforms offer limited support mechanisms for creators with disabilities, and traffic and monetization channels are not sufficiently inclusive of marginalized groups. Third, digital employment for young persons with disabilities lacks sustained policy and financial support, and the linkage between training and employment is often fragile. Fourth, social prejudice persists, and employer acceptance of new media practitioners with disabilities remains to be improved.

In light of these challenges and aligned with the goals of Agenda item 3, the following recommendations are put forward: First, Member States are encouraged to support civil society organizations in delivering accessible digital media empowerment programmes for youth with disabilities and low-income youth, integrate digital cultural skills training into social protection systems, and safeguard the right of vulnerable groups to participate in cultural life. Second, platform enterprises are urged to establish support mechanisms for creators with disabilities, improve accessible content creation tools, and expand channels for vulnerable groups to achieve decent work through digital media. Third, support is needed for cross-national knowledge sharing among civil society organizations, and localized practices of media empowerment for vulnerable groups should be included in the resource base for discussions on economic, social and cultural rights within the Human Rights Council. Fourth, it is called for that digital cultural rights and digital decent work for persons with disabilities

be integrated into the right to development assessment framework and given priority attention in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

V. Conclusion

In the digital age, cultural rights and the right to decent work are closely interconnected. The Future Media Practitioners Programme demonstrates that media capacity empowerment can help marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities and low-income youth transition from spectators to creators of culture, while earning labour income and achieving social inclusion. The organization stands ready to continue sharing its programme cases and curricular experience, and to engage with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Member States and civil society organizations worldwide to further advance economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development under Agenda item 3.

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1. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
 2. Official website of Shanghai Songding Social Welfare Innovation and Development Center
 3. “Future Media Practitioners” series of public posts on official WeChat accounts of Huangpu District Converged Media Center and Songding Social Innovation, 2024–2026
 4. Relevant resolutions under Agenda item 3 of the United Nations Human Rights Council