



Economic and Social Council

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to
achieve sustainable development for all**

Statement submitted by Books to Africa International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

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

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The Role of Books in Eradicating Poverty in Africa

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), more than 50% of students who go to school in Africa will not be able to read or write properly after finishing school because of the poor quality of education they receive. In particular, the lack of books and educational materials is a challenge that cannot be ignored.

In response to this environmental and educational problem, four African students in the United Kingdom established Books to Africa International — a United Kingdom registered charity that is educating people and saving the environment by collecting donated books from the United Kingdom and sending them to institutions of learning across Africa. Till date, the charity has collected more than 1 million books that would have ended up in landfill and have already shipped, cleared and distributed more than 600,000 to students, teachers and institutions of learning across 14 African countries.

With very good books for all academic levels available at our warehouse in the United Kingdom, Books to Africa International is encouraging all member states to collaborate with us in shipping, clearing and distributing donated books from countries where excess books and resources constitute an environmental problem, to countries where the lack of such valuable resources is destroying the future of our children. In particular, the high cost and complications of clearing donated books at the port is a significant challenge to our work.

At Books to Africa International, we believe education is key to defeating poverty in Africa and are open to working especially with African member states to ensure the smooth shipping, clearing and distribution of donated books and educational materials to the most impoverished public institutions in Africa.
