



## Economic and Social Council

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### Substantive session of 2011

Geneva, 4-29 July 2011

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**High-level segment: annual ministerial review**

### **Statement submitted by Jesuit Refugee Service, 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 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* E/2011/100.



**Statement\***

Jesuit Refugee Service welcomes “the implementation of internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education” as the subject of the annual ministerial review. In Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals, the nations of the world have pledged themselves to achieve universal primary education. As the High-level Meeting takes place, less than four years remain to obtain this objective, and while the recently released *Education For All Global Monitoring Report* for 2011 shows that significant positive strides have been taken globally, it is clear that the target will not be reached by 2015. This despite the fact that the right to education, especially primary education is guaranteed by a number of international treaties including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 28), Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (articles 50, 94), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (article 28), and the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (article 22). Among the groups of children whose access to education is systematically below national and international percentages are those who have been forcibly displaced by armed conflict either as refugees or internally displaced people.

Jesuit Refugee Service has worked extensively in providing primary and other forms of education to people forcibly displaced since 1980. At present it provides education services to approximately 285,000 young people in 25 countries worldwide. The vast majority of these students are receiving primary education. Jesuit Refugee Service not only teaches many forcibly displaced children, but we also learn from them. Some of the lessons we have learned are quite painful. We have learned that at times schools become military targets either to recruit child soldiers or to destabilize local communities. We have learned that, as a rule, school enrolment rates are lower for children forcibly displaced by armed conflict than for other national populations. We have learned that stopping free education after primary school leads to vast social problems in both refugee hosting and repatriation countries. We have learned heartening lessons as well. We have learned that refugee and internally displaced parents will make extraordinary sacrifices to provide their children with an education. We have learned that providing education often assists refugee and internally displaced children in overcoming stresses they have experienced because of forced displacement. We continue to see that there are many bright young minds that can make important contributions to their communities in the future.

**Recommendations**

This learning leads us to make the following recommendations to the States: (a) incorporate forcibly displaced children (internally displaced persons or refugees) into national education plans; (b) recognizing that a primary education is no longer enough, extend compulsory free education through secondary school for all children regardless of their status; (c) in States where there are protracted refugee situations and encampment policies for refugees, fully integrate schools in refugee camps into the national system and provide free secondary education to all refugee children.

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\* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.