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Statement submitted by International Research Foundation for Development, 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.

* E/2011/100.



Statement*

Educational goals for both primary and secondary levels in most of the poorer countries in the world have not been achieved. Even some adults who have received some schooling are functionally illiterate and lack skills. Another critical observation is the disparity in educational attainments between groups within countries and regions. Gender disparity is more dramatic, and the bias against girls from rural communities is a critical challenge in achieving educational goals set by the United Nations.

Absence or lack of basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, school buildings, water and sanitation, trained teachers, and teaching tools prevent attaining educational goals. Lack of financial resources and political commitment are fundamental challenges that the world is facing today. In the context of digital revolution, the poor countries and regions in the world are lagging behind and trapped into a vicious cycle that requires urgent attention.

International Research Foundation for Development has embarked on a comprehensive ICT application for global education and development. This effort will result in establishing a Globally Based Computerized and Electronic Education Infrastructure Network and implementing a comprehensive “e-Community Development Strategy”. International Research Foundation for Development will strive for the following core objectives: (a) educating children, youth, men, women, mentally challenged people; (b) generating and disseminating knowledge; (c) promoting access to information and communication rights; and (d) application of ICT into socio-economic, politico-cultural development, particularly in marginalized communities and regions (both in rural and urban areas).

This effort is aimed at human skills development, which will contribute towards the targets (to connect villages with ICT and establish community access points; to connect universities, colleges, secondary schools and primary schools with ICT; to connect health centres, cultural centres; to connect all local and central government departments, etc.) set in the World Summit of the Information Society Plan of Action, and creating a sustainable e-society for the twenty-first century. International Research Foundation for Development will bring all the sectors (governmental bodies, business and industry, NGO/community-based organizations) together to maximize full human potential, institutional capacity-building, sustainable utilization of local resources, thereby integrating marginalized communities into the national and global process of development. This project will particularly strive for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The final aim is to “bridge the digital divide” between peripheries and the centres within national boundaries, regions, and the global division between North and South.

The e-Community Development Strategy is an integrated approach. This strategy will use ICT to promote education pertaining to all development sectors and stakeholders. It will provide complete digital access (availability of infrastructure, affordability of access to all educational levels, quality of ICT services, and Internet usage). However, mere digital access will not be accepted in local communities unless it will bring employment and improve the living conditions of the population. Therefore, a generation of knowledge, at various levels of the globe, is fundamental

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

to this approach. In that regard, wealth creation will be considered the core of this approach that goes beyond pure monetary and material conditions. The main objective of International Research Foundation for Development is to mobilize resources for human capital development and to achieve sustainable development.
