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Statement submitted by Bunyad Literacy Community Council, 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*

In a fast-evolving techno-global world, literacy has moved beyond its traditional meaning (that is, ability to read and write at an adequate level of proficiency that is necessary for communication in everyday life). Literacy has always been a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups. With the changes in society, concept of literacy too has changed. The increased complexity of literate environments of the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, that is, many literacies. These literacies are multiple, dynamic, and fast evolving. Now the word “literacy” has connotations attributed to various other dimensions, whereby words like technological literacy, mathematical literacy and visual literacy abound. As in the past, they are inextricably linked with particular histories, life possibilities, and social trajectories of individuals and groups.

The twenty-first century demands that we: (a) Develop proficiency with the tools of technology; (b) Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally; (c) Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes; (d) Manage, analyse, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information; (e) Create, critique, analyse, and evaluate multimedia texts; (f) Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.

Illiteracy has multifaceted implications for individuals, societies and countries at large.

Literacy has been proven to be the key to peace, health and economic success of people and nations. It is now considered a significant variable for the success of a nation, and hence one issue that cannot be ignored.

It has been established that there is a relationship between illiteracy and income. Figures over the world show that rates of literacy and gross national product have a strong co-relation.

Literacy Rate	Per Capita Income
Less than 55 per cent	Less than \$600
Between 55-84 per cent	Around \$2,400
Between 85-95 per cent	Around \$3,700
Above 98 per cent	More than \$12,000

The above figures show that, the per capita income doubles as the literacy rate doubles. Literacy brings economic dividends and is a worthwhile investment for welfare of the countries and their populace.

Clearly, there are concrete benefits of literacy that are quite quantifiable like, economic well-being that comes with better job and earnings; physical well-being and improved life expectancy with improved knowledge of nutrition and health;

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

better quality of life where ease of reading of instructions, sign posts, civic documents one generally encounters, is evident; lesser political oppression; and ability to cope with everyday life and society in general with a certain level of ease and comfort. While targeting literacy in young ones helps plan for a brighter future, adult literacy brings with it the benefit of immediate returns. It could also bring with it the dividend of producing adults who are proactive for the education of their own children.
