



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
24 April 2012

Original: English

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### **Substantive session of 2012**

New York, 2-27 July 2012

Item 14 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**Social and human rights questions: social development**

### **Statement submitted by World Organization for Early Childhood Education, 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/2012/100.



## Statement

Guided by the growing body of research revealing increased vulnerability of the youngest children, aged 0 to 8 years, the organization appeals to all Governments to consider the multiple benefits of initiatives dedicated to achieving Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals.

As essential reference sources, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the report of the United Nations Children's Fund entitled *State of the World's Children 2012*, underscore the critical issues and inform the development of initiatives to benefit the youngest and most vulnerable populations and those most in need of support. Governments and other stakeholders are urged to provide quality early childhood care, education and services.

The compelling consequence of investing in early childhood care and education is increased employment opportunities within the field of early childhood and beyond in related fields, such as medicine and health care, nutrition and social services. Additionally, investing in early childhood care and education increases vocational opportunities for a trained workforce that supports the renovation, construction and maintenance of care centres and preschools, the manufacturing of basic equipment and supplies and the production of goods for nutritional needs.

While Governments are urged to support early childhood development initiatives, the organization wishes to call attention to the benefits that not only build workforce capacity but also contribute to the development of sustainable economic opportunities at the local, regional and national levels. It urges Governments to work towards eliminating gross disparities and inequities in the provision of early childhood care and educational opportunities with regard to poverty, gender, disability, language, ethnicity and location. Without deliberate actions, Governments will continue to fall short instead of building capacities that ensure the well-being of its children, who will become the next generation of citizens and economic growth.

Every Government must:

(a) Develop and/or continue to refine national policies and plans for children, from the prenatal stage through 8 years of age, which include the protection of young children; cognitive stimulation and learning opportunities; social and emotional support; and adequate health care and nutrition;

(b) Establish early childhood care and education for the youngest, most vulnerable and most excluded children throughout the world. At present, only one in five children aged 3 to 5 years of better-off urban families in developing countries has access to organized formal or informal care and education. Developing and expanding programmes will provide a good start for all girls and boys;

(c) Recognize that early childhood development occurs within a wide range of environments, including the home, childcare centres, nurseries, preschools and the community at large, as well as within faith-based, private and alternative care settings, and incorporate each into its plans;

(d) Invest in preparing well-trained early childhood personnel, who are essential for providing optimal experiences that help all young children to thrive and achieve their full potential;

(e) Develop or strengthen the ability of educational institutions to build capacity and strategies for leadership and research to improve early child development for all children, including the disabled, appropriate to the national interest;

(f) Acknowledge and demonstrate the need for early childhood personnel to receive adequate remuneration as a critical component of quality early childhood care and education programmes.

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