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**Promotion and protection of all human rights,
civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by International Educational Development, Inc, a non-governmental organization on the roster

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

[10 May 2013]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Human rights and extreme poverty*

International Educational Development, Inc. and the Association of Humanitarian Law addressed the situation of street children in our written statement A/HRC/19/NGO/38.¹ In it we discussed the impact on certain “conditional cash transfer” programs in Latin America to alleviate the extreme poverty of street children and to provide them with an education. Of the three such programs we looked into, Oportunidades in Mexico, Juntos in Peru and Bolsa Familia in Brazil, Bolsa Familia has shown the most promise and has had a significant impact on Brazil’s poor children.

Bolsa Familia is a conditional cash-transfer program that seeks to alleviate poverty via cash to families in return for ensuring their children attend school and are vaccinated. In Brazil, because the head of household is usually the mother, the Bolsa Familia program provides the payments only to the mothers, and only if the child is regularly in school. The families also participate in other programs, some of them specifically for the mothers.

Programs like Bolsa Família have helped to reduce current poverty and help families to invest in their children, thus reducing future poverty. However, as poverty is a multilayered issue, and involves issues beyond education, additional efforts are needed.

Rômulo Paes de Sousa, the executive secretary of Brazil's social-development ministry, distinguishes "old" poverty and "new" poverty. "Old" poverty encompasses a lack of food and basic services, while "new" poverty is characterized by drug addiction, violence, family breakdown, and environmental degradation. Many of the problems of fast-growing cities, particularly in developing countries, are those of new poverty. Also, the relationship between poverty and drug use is well-documented and long-standing one. Drug abuse is particularly prevalent in the urban areas mired with poverty, unemployment/long-term unemployment, early school leaving, and poor/insecure housing or homelessness.

Currently, there is a crack epidemic in Brazil. The government has addressed this in the favelas by a major operation against gangs – involving police sweeps and incarceration of drug dealers. Now, after some years, there is a reduction in crack use in these areas and far less control of the youth by gangs. Results of the Bolsa Familia program are improving and children are now faced with better roles models for success rather than being pulled into the drug world. For example, there is a new dance craze, and vulnerable youth are drawn to dance competitions rather than to drug dealing.

We urge the Special Rapporteur, perhaps in consultation with WHO, to propose suggestions and resources to help combat drug dealing and substance abuse in areas suffering from extreme poverty. A combination of the conditional cash transfer programs and reducing drug dealing and abuse in these areas shows promise to get families mired in urban poverty to improve their situations.

* The Association of Humanitarian Lawyers, an NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.

¹ Association of Humanitarian Lawyers researcher Alejandro Vera contributed to the preparation of this document.