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Statement submitted by Indian Water Foundation, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

It is always said “The Future depends on what you do Today”. Talking about equality & inclusion, there has been shift in policy approaches moving from ‘welfare’ (eighties) to ‘development’ (nineties) and now ‘empowerment’ (twenty-first century). With greater regard to empower local community especially in South Asian context wherein almost all are developing countries, IWF, a non-profit civil society is extensively engaged in enhancing public awareness, disseminating scientific knowledge and best practices at grassroots level on water and environment related sectors.

With special reference to Meghalaya, IWF, selected as key knowledge partner with the Meghalaya government for the flagship Integrated Basin Development and Livelihood Promotion (IBDLP) Programme, envisaged to create an ecologically sustainable and inclusive development. Meghalaya, a mid-riparian state situated in the proximity of 5 countries is endowed with rich environmental capital, including minerals, forest cover and rich biodiversity. Through 22 missions (like tourism, forestry) we spearheaded inclusive efforts to bridge socio-economic inequality. Bringing enabling benefits of social inclusion, capacity building, fast paced delivery plans, converged efforts of policy and institutions, IBDLP generated an impression of holistic impact on the society. Earning admiration in national and regional arenas, a story like IBDLP has much to teach where empowerment was linked to equality and inclusivity.

Our current endeavor in Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand gave an impression that every single individual is bestowed to act as ‘catalyst for change’. Stakeholder discussion at Ground Zero gave a glimpse of experiences viz education, health, basic infrastructure, agriculture, skill development and financial inclusion. As a proactive society, we envisaged to sensitize, incentivize and galvanize the community towards a paradigm shift from periphery to mainstream development. The outcomes reflected an informed & inspired citizenry who wished to move towards a sustainable and balanced development.

Moving beyond experiences and striking the co-relation between empowerment, equality and inclusion, it must be known that empowerment is a buzz word, but few understand it as a ‘skill’ to master. Managing ‘WE & Ourselves’ first holds the key towards ‘collective & cohesive empowerment’. It is basically a win-win situation for all.

Interlinking SDGs to include disadvantaged and marginalized sections of the society must be accorded top priority. With special mention to SDG 10 (reducing inequalities) and integrating with SDG-1, 2, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 17, a sustainable roadmap for ‘inclusive development’ must be carved at the international level and tailored to minimize the already widening inequalities across the globe.

Summing up, we firmly believe that ‘the world must truly move towards a trajectory of Equity, i.e. Equality with a Quality in the times to come’.