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Written statement submitted by Fondation Ostad Elahi: éthique et solidarité humaine, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following written 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

Fondation Ostad Elahi: éthique et solidarité humaine, which has 10 years' experience of ethics education at French universities and *grandes écoles*, in particular through master's degrees in sustainable development, is proposing specific actions to promote the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Individual ethics can be taught from primary school to university, and beyond that through continuing education. The teaching of individual ethics – the practical, experimental science of human conduct that is taught with the ultimate goal of ensuring that individuals can develop their true humanity – provides a way to raise the awareness of students, in a manner appropriate to their level, of the countless individual and collective benefits that ethics provides when its principles are applied in a methodical, regular and well thought out manner.

By learning to identify and control the functioning of the psyche – which essentially comes down to the egotism-altruism dialectic that is constantly at play in all individuals, whether or not they are aware of it – students become able to attack the very root of violence, discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes of all kinds. This approach promotes the emergence of a society characterized by peace, non-violence, tolerance, solidarity, equity, respect for human rights and gender equality (targets 1, 5 and 7 of Sustainable Development Goal 4).

In order to bring about these changes in mentality, there is a need to increase the number of places where ethics is taught by motivating teachers and future teachers to develop a practical methodology of ethics. Means of doing so could include:

- Conducting and publicizing scientific research that demonstrates the benefits of practicing ethics with regard to physical and mental health and interpersonal relationships.
- Organizing events to promote reflection on and the practice of ethics. Fondation Ostad Elahi, with sponsorship from the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and in partnership with a number of higher education institutions, has been doing this in France for more than 10 years through its awards for education and research in ethics. These awards are given out every two or three years to reward and recognize students, researchers, and professors whose work focuses on ethics, knowledge of and respect for the rights of others, and the development of human qualities.

Fondation Ostad Elahi proposes that States members of ECOSOC establish similar programmes, as they encourage and recognize teaching and research in the area of ethics and thus, in the long term, promote the development ethics – the foundation that enables humanity to flourish in every individual – itself.