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Written statement submitted by Centro UNESCO de Donostia-San Sebastián, 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.



Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Empowering people requires the implementation of a strategic process for building knowledge and experience to promote the design and implementation of technically solid plans to foster human development.

The general approach to this strategic process should be based on anticipation, planning, implementation, delivery and evaluation of actions on the basis of their impact and cost-effectiveness.

The process should involve continuous learning that is responsive to change, and a will to improve the social reality through appropriate actions. It must also take into account the crucial principle that efforts must be made to encourage participation and strengthen democracy.

People become empowered to develop their social functions in support of sustainable development when they learn to take initiative. Only then do they begin to change, learn, adapt processes, seek maturity and strive to combine ideals with actions.

This type of learning is flexible, malleable and permanent. Its objective is to ensure that action is taken to evaluate decisions in order to bring about change that will benefit individuals and communities.

Developing people who are effective, understanding and able to interact, who will transform society, requires us to turn theory into practice by offering guidance and practical activities to promote specific actions in the community. It also involves ensuring that education is productive, profitable and effective, meaning that it prepares students for jobs or to make an effective contribution through technically and ethically relevant activities.

Empowering people to achieve general and common objectives should involve the use of mechanisms that encourage the exchange of views, discussion, debate and work based on specific objectives that take into account situations that arise in everyday life but also aim to foster a greater sense of humanity.

Ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Strengthening democracy and revitalizing civil society require joint work and planning, adequate research, the sharing of experiences and cooperation.

Cooperation is based on learning how to work as part of a team, solve problems as a group, interact with other social stakeholders and resolve conflicts through dialogue. It is based on communication, negotiation and tolerance.

Planning is justified if, at the design stage, the implementation context has been taken into account. It is also essential to ensure that proposals for activities take into consideration the global nature of the situation; plans are made to facilitate concrete proposals that promote discussions based on equity and active collaboration; plans are tailored to the environment through the cultivation of relational channels and behaviours that can cope with change and social progress in a positive way and without shock; and appropriate actions are taken to promote active participation and strengthen the self-sufficiency of societies so that they can engage with one another on an equal footing, without humiliating dependence.