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Written statement submitted by *Oui pour une enfance noble*, 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.



Written statement

Obtaining a quality education is the foundation for improving people's lives and sustainable development. Unfortunately, this is not the case for some of the countries in Africa, such as Mali, which has low literacy rates for young people (56 per cent for boys and 33 per cent for girls) and a high primary school dropout rate (around 30 per cent) (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2014). Because of certain unfavourable economic, social and psychological conditions in Mali, some children are reduced to begging, street hawking, sexual slavery, domestic work and more, instead of going to school.

Moreover, the multifaceted crisis that shook Mali in 2012 affected its educational system, forcing the closure of 750 schools in the northern and central regions and displacing children and teachers to the south and bordering countries. According to analyses by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on attainment of the Education for All goals by 2015, the various theretofore improving indicators worsened from 2012 onwards, despite a slight rebound between 2013 and 2014.

Today, education in Mali still does not meet the aspired goals, owing to factors such as abnormal and ineffective programme implementation, proliferation of private schools with doubtful accreditation, recruitment of unqualified or minimally trained teaching staff and overcrowded classrooms.

However, despite the multifaceted problems confronting Mali, our association remains committed to supporting the Government of Mali in its efforts to achieve quality basic education for all while creating a dynamic of increasing enrolment, particularly for girls, in order to reduce the factors responsible for disparities and promote their empowerment.

Through its school sponsorship programme for children in difficult circumstances, we give children the opportunity to go to school, have a brighter future and escape the poverty, exclusion and exploitation they endure. In its 15 years of existence, this programme has covered school fees, individual school kit purchases, ongoing monitoring and remedial classes for thousands of poor children in Mali. It also has a capacity-building component for teaching staff, providing teacher training in innovative teaching methods. With 10 children sponsored in 2002/2003, the association now has around 3,000 children enrolled for the 2018/2019 academic year. Some of members of the first class have already gained independence by entering the labour market.

In addition to improving their quality of life, access to inclusive and equitable education can help to give local populations the tools required to develop innovative solutions to the world's greatest problems.
