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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 Iran Autism Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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

[15 August 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



The Crucial Role of Individuals with Autism in Social and Economic Development: Emphasizing Inclusive Education and Employment in Achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

The Iran Autism Association (IAA) is honored to participate in this interactive dialogue on the right to development. We extend our gratitude to the Expert Mechanism for their continued efforts in promoting the full realization of this right for all individuals, including those with disabilities.

Today, we wish to highlight the crucial role that individuals with autism must play in social and economic development. As the world advances towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is imperative that the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are genuinely upheld. These principles emphasize inclusivity, equality, and the empowerment of all individuals, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from sustainable development.

Individuals with autism possess unique talents, perspectives, and potential that can contribute significantly to social and economic development. However, these contributions often remain untapped due to systemic barriers, societal stigma, and lack of appropriate support systems. To foster an inclusive society, it is essential that persons with autism are not merely passive recipients of development but active participants in shaping it.

Access to quality education and inclusive employment opportunities are foundational to the realization of the right to development for individuals with autism. Educational systems must be adaptive and supportive, offering personalized learning approaches that cater to the diverse needs of autistic students. Furthermore, employment policies should promote inclusive hiring practices, reasonable accommodations, and the recognition of the distinct abilities of individuals with autism.

Social inclusion is a key pillar of development. It is vital that communities are educated on autism, reducing stigma and fostering environments where individuals with autism feel valued and included. Governments and civil society organizations should collaborate to create spaces that encourage the participation of autistic individuals in community decision-making processes, thus ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected.

We urge states to adopt and implement policies and legal frameworks that specifically address the needs and rights of individuals with autism. Such frameworks should ensure that individuals with autism are empowered to participate fully in economic, social, and cultural life, and that their contributions are recognized and supported.

International cooperation and the sharing of best practices are essential in promoting the rights of individuals with autism globally. We encourage the Human Rights Council and the Expert Mechanism to facilitate platforms for the exchange of knowledge, strategies, and tools that have proven effective in supporting the development and inclusion of persons with autism.

In conclusion, the Iran Autism Association (IAA) calls upon all member states and stakeholders to prioritize the inclusion of individuals with autism in their development agendas. By doing so, we not only uphold their rights but also enrich our societies with the diversity of thought, creativity, and resilience that individuals with autism bring.
