



## Economic and Social Council

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Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**High-level segment: annual ministerial review**

### **Statement submitted by Right To Play, 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.

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\* E/2011/100.



## **Statement\***

Right To Play believes strongly in the contribution that sports and play can make towards achieving global and national education objectives, particularly the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All initiative.

Sports and play-based learning can help alleviate many of the challenges experienced in reaching global education goals, such as maintaining student retention, reaching marginalized children, achieving gender parity, combating stigma and low literacy rates and delivering education in emergency contexts. Sports and play-based learning programmes can help achieve the goals of Education for All, in particular Goals 1, 5 and 6, in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- Increasing readiness and access to primary schools
- Increasing a sense of belonging and well-being through inclusive programming resulting in higher retention rates
- Training teachers to break down traditional gender barriers and to tackle stigma and discrimination
- Engaging children in enjoyable sports and play-based learning to motivate them to attend school regularly and to help improve academic achievement
- Assisting children in the development of literacy, numeracy and other academic areas through adaptive programmes
- Providing a positive and safe environment for children to learn

Play-based learning also has a critical role to play in the psychosocial and physical development of children and youth, particularly during the first six years of life, as it contributes to the early stages of brain and language development.

## **Recommendations**

Recognizing the immense contribution of sports and play-based learning to global education goals and objectives and the merits of regular physical activity for holistic child and youth development, Right To Play supports the following recommendations:

- Ensuring access to sports and play and physical and health education for children and youth as an explicit policy objective in the context of national frameworks
- Promoting child and youth participation in sports and play by ensuring that sports, physical education and health are included in educational curricula
- Ensuring that education curricula focused on holistic child development are active, relevant, reflective, collaborative and applied. Action-oriented learning occurs through games and play activities that have physical, cognitive, social and emotional focus

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\* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

- Recognizing the different developmental stages of children and youth to ensure that physical education and sport policies, implementation guidelines, training resources, programmes and education curricula are age-appropriate
  - Ensuring budget allocations in support of child and youth development through sport and play initiatives at local, municipal and national levels
  - Ensuring safe spaces for children to engage in sport and play activities and allocating resources to infrastructure in schools and communities
  - Ensuring that all policies and programmes integrating sport and play are carefully designed to be inclusive, particularly of girls and young women and children and youth living with disabilities
  - Building capacity of teachers, leaders and coaches to deliver sport and play programmes through training and sensitization on issues related to child development, gender, child protection, disability and adaptive sport
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