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Statement submitted by Ukrainian World Congress, 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*

Sustainable development through education

Effective universal primary education for all children means that the individual physical, psychological, linguistic and emotional needs of children must be met through a full course of primary schooling. Simply teaching the "3 Rs" (reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic) is no longer an effective strategy in the twenty-first century.

A major challenge in developing, including post-Soviet, countries is meeting the educational requirements of children with special needs (physical, psychological, linguistic and emotional). In a society, which continues to struggle under the burden of intolerance, individuals, who do not fit the one-size-fits-all model are viewed as an embarrassment and a burden.

Recommendations

Post-Soviet countries (e.g. Ukraine) have an express need to raise awareness among educators, the public and policymakers that children with physical, psychological, linguistic and emotional challenges need:

- To socialize with their peers in a school setting (and not be marginalized through at-home instruction)

- A programme that places focus on enhancing their potential (and not one that restricts itself to labelling their "defect" resulting in learned helplessness)

- Programmes that will educate and nurture child advocacy professionals (and not individuals restricted to implementing and monitoring State policy with a disregard for individual uniqueness)

Evidence in countries of the developed world has shown that making schools inclusive and providing special needs children with a child-focused education results in gains for all children and, ultimately, society at large.

The United Nations bodies should raise awareness of this need and coordinate financial assistance to meet it.

Another significant issue in the educational field is addressing the needs of ethnic minorities. Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides that: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language".

A case in point is the Ukrainian ethnic minority which is the largest in the Russian Federation. There is not a single Ukrainian language school in the Russian Federation. By comparison, the Russian ethnic minority is the largest in Ukraine. There are some 3,000 schools in Ukraine where the Russian language is either offered or serves as the main language of instruction.

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* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

Evidently, something is amiss in the Russian Federation. The aforesaid incongruity does not serve the Russian State nor does the Ukrainian ethnic minority therein, as the latter feels slighted and thus sees itself outside the mainstream of the Russian State. This lack of attention to ethnic minorities is palpable in other spheres in the Russian Federation, e.g., religion, etc.

The United Nations should pay particular attention to the development of linguistic and religious rights of ethnic minorities, not only in compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the aforesaid Covenant, but with the aim of sustaining the democratic development of its Member States. Cultural development in education is basic to fostering a more loyal and participatory citizenry.

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