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Statement submitted by Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo, 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.

* E/2011/100.



Statement*

A need for a human rights-based approach to education

Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo (VIS), as a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, intends to raise some concerns relating to the right to education and to urge some recommendations on a human rights-based approach to education to the 2011 high-level segment of the Council.

In accordance with general comment No. 13 (1999) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to education, we want to underline that education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights and that the full realization of this right is interlinked to some essential features (such as availability, accessibility, non-discrimination, physical and economic accessibility, acceptability, adaptability), to different types of obligation on States parties (such as the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil) and to the consideration of the right to education as a life cycle approach. The present status of the fulfilment of the right to education is very problematic: despite significant progress over the last decade, universal primary education has not yet been achieved and we are far from realization of Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals.

VIS intends to recall that only through a human rights-based approach to the right to education can the situation change and the implementation of the internationally agreed goals and commitment take place in a concrete way. VIS recommends a human rights-based approach to education taking into consideration the following features of such an approach:

1. It is based on the universal values reflected in the human rights principles and standards.
2. It establishes duties and obligations and corresponding claims.
3. It empowers people as active participants in their own development and recognizes them as rights holders.
4. It focuses on groups of people subjected to discrimination and suffering from disadvantage and exclusion.
5. It considers developmental challenges from a holistic lens guided by human rights principles, taking into account the civil, political, economic, social and cultural aspects of a problem.

A human rights-based approach to education requires a framework that addresses the right of access to education, the right to quality education and a due respect for human rights in education. These dimensions are interdependent and interlinked, and a rights-based education needs the realization of all three. The right to education requires a commitment to ensuring universal access, including taking all necessary measures to reach the most marginalized children.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

Recommendations

1. Application of human rights principles and standards in the implementation of education policies (within all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of education rights).

2. Coordination of different sectors of society in a comprehensive and multisectoral approach to the right to education.

3. Realization of a robust legislative framework that focuses on the elimination of discrimination, the identification of minimum standards, the elimination of child labour and the development of participation rights.
