



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 May 2011

Original: English

Substantive session of 2011

Geneva, 4-29 July 2011

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda*

High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Statement submitted by Center for Migration Studies of New York, 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

While much has been achieved in increasing the number of students receiving primary education, the same is not true for the completion of secondary school. Governments and civil society need to address the issue of school dropouts. Individuals leave school prior to graduation for a variety of reasons. Among these are: failing grades, behavioural issues, personal health problems or the need to care for siblings or an ailing parent, pregnancy, a need to help families earn income, as a result of war or civil unrest, natural catastrophes, forced migration, boredom, or a desire to work full time. These are all issues that should be of concern to all.

Research has documented that generally those with higher levels of education are more economically successful, and that a student's decision to drop out of school has long-term consequences that can contribute to juvenile delinquency, welfare dependency, or, in worst cases, prison. For societies to grow and develop, an educated populace is essential.

Some students who drop out of school are looking for further education, often in more informal or non-traditional ways. They may have developed skills such as self-efficacy, optimism, and a keen ability to solve problems that influence one's ability to succeed and aim higher in life outside the school environment, but it is also equally necessary to develop other abilities that are not readily honed if not guided by a mentor. The way children are educated can have a powerful impact on the kind of society and families they build. Schools should prepare children for the responsibilities of citizenship and full participation in society as much as for economic success in private life. As noted in the Dakar Framework for Action: "... all children ... have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be."

Recommendations

- Compile a more thorough documentation of the reasons for student drop-out rates in school, including migrants, and use the data to develop strategies to assist students to remain in school and define national educational plans.
- Explore new methodologies to assist non-traditional learners who need different structures and styles of teaching to achieve academic success.
- Provide funding for skills training programmes that will enable students who have left formal education to develop other talents they may possess.
- Actively seek out school dropouts and develop individualized educational plans with them to help them to realize their full potential.