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High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Statement submitted by Korea Institute of Brain Science, 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*

The Korea Institute of Brain Science organized a Conference on 7 January 2009 titled Brain “Education for All”: How to Promote the Six “Education for All” Goals Around the World, based on the theme of the 2011 Annual Ministerial Review. It was attended by representatives from Member States, NGOs, academia and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The conference was also convened to celebrate the anniversary of Brain Education Day, proclaimed for 8 January 2009 by Mayor Bloomberg of New York City. Brain Education was presented as a global movement dedicated to develop creative efficacy of individuals and communities.

1. Key themes emerged in the discussion, including the need for new methods of education and the role that Brain Education can play.
2. Progress in education is essential to advance in a broad range of issues from poverty and malnutrition to maternal and child mortality and the spread of infectious disease.
3. Present realities require an education that is universal rather than focused on a specific set of skills.
4. Understanding how the brain works as a biological organ is necessary for developing sound educational programmes.
5. Another theme concerned the use of visual language. Campaigns such as Brain Education require a visual language that can draw in a large audience and spread the message throughout the world.
6. The role of Brain Education to help children in conflict and post-conflict situations was also stressed.

Real-life examples of Brain Education success were presented. Part of the reason for success is the passion and conviction of the certified Brain Education Instructors, who have all undergone Brain Education themselves, emphasizing that the quality of teachers is one of the most vital components of an effective education. A case study was presented on the experience of teaching Brain Education to a group of middle school students that encourages them to make a positive contribution to local communities. Specific details were provided on the implementation of Brain Education as an educational methodology in the developing world, with a special focus on Africa.

The goals of the UNESCO “Education for All” initiative were discussed. The six goals strive to go beyond the two educational goals outlined by the Millennium Development Goals set in 2000. The Education for All initiative aims for more. It advocates greater access to early childhood care and education, as well as a renewed push to raise adult literacy levels. Brain World Magazine was introduced as an initiative that tries to bridge the gap between academic studies of the brain and popular culture and mainstream media, with a focus on Brain Education and global issues.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

Recommendations included: (a) Promote a new understanding of education as a holistic human development endeavour; (b) Expand early childhood care and education to build the foundations of fundamental cognitive processes; (c) Governments should make education a political priority integrated into national poverty reduction strategies; (d) Implement a whole-person approach to education, which addresses not only cognitive skills but also physical and mental health; (e) Adopt specific brain education programmes for children in conflict and post-conflict situations.
