



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 Biopolitics International Organisation, 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*

In the global struggle to eradicate poverty and achieve the MDGs, education is the most important tool. Environmental education relates to every field of human activity and addresses all issues that are important for livelihoods in the 21st century. It equips people with the capacity to broaden their opportunities and perspectives, and prepares them to cope with the changing world around us. An integrated environmental education can be a powerful vehicle in instilling new values for the protection of life, stimulating sustainable economic development and creating peaceful and equitable societies for the future.

Environmental education is not only related to the conservation of precious natural resources. It can also help in the development of skills for the world of work through the creation of “green” jobs and the training of children and adults alike. In this way, it equips people with the knowledge and aptitudes necessary to increase income and employment opportunities, thereby reducing hunger and poverty and enhancing environmental harmony and prosperity. Environmental education can also encourage lifelong learning, by helping us to understand and better interact with the ever-changing and diverse world around us.

The new technologies available through ICT can bring environmental education to every corner of the world, being of particular value to underprivileged areas. E-learning and other distance learning options complement traditional learning tools and can help to spread information and environmental know-how globally. Peace, human rights, education and socio-economic development cannot be achieved on a planet ravaged by pollution and resource depletion. International cooperation in environmental protection can spur intercultural dialogue and enhance educational efforts to help people embrace values such as peace, non-discrimination, equality, justice, tolerance and mutual respect.

In an ever-changing and globalized world, both an international and a local approach to education are needed. Through environmental education, children can learn to think critically about values concerning our entire planet and act locally to make decisions to consume sustainably and live in respect of one another. Education must also be attractive and progressive. Children must be exposed to paradigms to allow for their creativity and talent to flourish, while constant emphasis must be given on coupling technology and the arts in order to encourage creativity and critical thinking.

Every child must be given the opportunity to participate in education. For this to happen, parents and guardians must also be educated on the value of education. Children will not be able to attend school if their parents or guardians won't let them. All ages and all community levels must be engaged in the educational process. Vocational environmental training can help adults broaden their horizons and work perspectives and become sensitized to the importance of giving their children the opportunity to receive an education.

Humanity can no longer afford to disregard the close relationship between its actions and the environment. Meeting today's educational challenges requires new ways of stimulating creativity and action to alleviate poverty and make education for all a reality.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.