



## Economic and Social Council

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**High-level segment: annual ministerial review**

### **Statement submitted by Fundación Intervida, 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\***

Education is a fundamental building block of human development and is one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty, improving health and achieving gender equality, peace and stability, and a decent life.

While free and compulsory education is ensured by most countries' legislation, the gap between the law and reality is still enormous, in most cases due to the limited budgets allocated to education.

Although children's school enrolment has increased to 89 per cent of the population, 67 million children are still out of school and it is estimated that the number will rise to 72 million by 2015. We are especially concerned about the gap in school access between boys and girls in some regions and about the poorest children's access to schools.

In many countries, there are no government educational facilities in slum areas where children are often not registered and do not officially exist. As a result, official statistics about school enrolment very rarely reflect the reality. The few existing schools are run with great effort by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), independent of the government sector. For instance, in the slums of Dhaka, only 3 per cent of school-age children attend school. The ownership of school land is another problematic issue, given that land ownership in slums is unclear while schools must own the land in order to be officially registered.

Education centres should play a critical role in protecting children from violence and abuse. For many children, however, educational settings expose them to mistreatment and teach them violence.

Education must be a top priority for the States since it is a powerful tool for eradicating violence and promoting gender equality, a culture of peace, human rights, respect for the environment and social justice. Universal primary education is not merely a question of schooling rates but also of quality. This implies equipping children and youth with the basic skills they need for life and work and social values.

We appreciate efforts by Member States towards the achievement of international goals but still encourage them to:

- (a) Renew their commitment to the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments through stronger action, especially in gender and quality issues;
- (b) Reduce public expenditure on items such as armament in order to increase budget allocation for education;
- (c) Establish a comprehensive system of penalties for parents or caretakers who fail to send their children to school;
- (d) Guarantee that the education system reaches the whole population and is free of charge;

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\* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

- (e) Extend their support to NGOs in the latter's task of providing education in slum areas;
  - (f) Remove all kinds of violence from both formal and informal educational settings;
  - (g) Establish curricula which promote values;
  - (h) Enhance teacher training without discrimination and guarantee decent wages;
  - (i) Search for innovative education models which respond to a wide range of realities.
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