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High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Statement submitted by Global Helping to Advance Women and Children, 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 and Corr.1.



Statement*

Global Helping to Advance Women and Children welcomes the theme of the 2011 annual ministerial review on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education.

The organization encourages the Council to continue to work towards achieving universal primary education by 2015, as part of Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals, and towards overcoming gender disparity in primary and secondary education at all levels by 2015, as part of Goal 3. The organization further encourages the Council to remain true to the following enshrined human rights instruments while working towards achieving the education-related Goals.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children” (Article 26-3)
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states: “The States parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents [...] to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions” (Article 18-4)
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states: “States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents [...] to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child” (Article 14-2)

The organization also notes the reference in paragraph 18 of the report of the Commission on Population and Development at its forty-fourth session, recognizing, *inter alia*, the duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for adolescents to provide appropriate direction and guidance in sexual and reproductive matters.

The organization expresses deep concerns with the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education, dated 23 July 2010, for not focusing on the legitimate educational needs of the world’s children, but rather placing the report’s emphasis on the “issue of the human right to comprehensive sexual education” for children, asserting incorrectly that such very controversial sexuality education is “grounded in human dignity and in international human rights law”.

The report states that individuals must be aware of their sexual rights (a term not found in any consensus document) including the right to “pleasurable” sexual experiences in order to achieve the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; it asserts that this can only be achieved through “comprehensive sexual education from the outset of our schooling” and that schools should foster pupils’ critical thinking about the various expressions of human sexuality and interpersonal relations, without reducing the topic to a biological approach.

The organization deplores the report’s blatant disregard for parental rights and for the infusion of the Special Rapporteur’s personal interpretation rather than the global consensus of binding human rights instruments. The organization points out that Special Rapporteurs are charged with exercising their functions in strict

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

observance of their mandate and in particular to ensure that their recommendations do not exceed their mandate as outlined in articles 3 (a), 6 (a), 6 (c), 7 and 8 (c) of Human Rights Council resolution 5/2, on the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council.
