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**Statement submitted by National Council of Child Rights
Advocates, Nigeria (south-west zone), 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.



Statement

Integrating science, technology and culture-sensitive innovations into building a world fit for children

Science education around the globe is remarkably similar but differs culturally. Science is viewed as an organized body of knowledge about the behaviour of the natural and physical world based on facts that can be tested. It is a whole new world to discover and its application is indispensable for solving the myriad problems associated with the cultural beliefs of nations. Students therefore need to acquire scientific knowledge and attitudes to develop their cultural heritage, given that science and society are intrinsically related. Their interactions would enhance scientific explanations for superstitious beliefs that influence effective teaching and learning of science.

Cultural differences and characteristics manifest themselves in different domains and at different depths. Applying the general definition given by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, culture includes spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group, in addition to its art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Culture is, in a nutshell, the way of life, behaviour, beliefs, values and symbols of a group of people, which they accept generally without thinking and which are passed on by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

The Millennium Development Goals have become the international standard of reference for measuring and tracking improvements in the human condition in developing countries. The well-being of these countries is directly related to the security of industrialized countries, making development a truly global venture.

Investment in science education has been one of the most critical sources of economic transformation. Such investment should be part of a larger framework to build capacity in science and technology and increase innovation worldwide. The one common element of the East Asian success stories is the high level of commitment by the Governments in those countries to education and the creation of national identity through integration. However, improvements in higher education should be accompanied by the requisite creation of economic opportunities so that graduates can apply the skills that they have acquired.

The strategy for countries to achieve the goal of enhancing science and technology capabilities should include devoting resources to implementation; obtaining complementary resources from international cooperation to help more young people enter higher education, paying special attention to the cultural barriers that appear at the level of secondary education; and giving incentives to private enterprises, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, to hire young university graduates. This strategy will help to start a virtuous cycle of technological upgrading.

In a country such as Nigeria, and in other developing nations with varying and diverse cultural dispensations, the objectivity of science education should be reflected in all cultures, religions and values so as to resist traditional beliefs that are irrational and, if left unchecked, will slow down the realization of the Goals.