



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
23 April 2013

Original: English

Substantive session of 2013

Geneva, 1-26 July 2013

**Coordination, programme and other questions:
tobacco or health**

Statement submitted by Australian Association of Yoga in Daily Life, 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

The principles of yoga offer help for all on this planet. Yoga means harmony of body, mind and consciousness, love and help for all living beings, respect for life, peace in the world, protection of nature and tolerance for all nationalities, cultures, races and religions.

Yoga in daily life is a scientific system created for our modern civilization that is based on ancient literature and culture. Its regular practice promotes physical, mental, social and spiritual health. Health is a struggle for many people. Being accustomed to certain comforts, we are using resources without thinking. The self-inquiry meditation techniques provide a tool for developing self-control, overcoming negative emotions and raising awareness.

Yoga is practised for good health, but from where does our good health come? We all need fresh air, healthy forests, nutritious food and clean water. However, we are hurting ourselves by rapidly polluting the planet, in part through what we call “development”. In the past 60 years, we have experienced many diseases, catastrophes and types of war that did not exist in the past. In our modern civilization, humanity and nature are suffering from pollution. Our oceans, rivers and lakes are polluted. However, if examined carefully, pollution is found to originate in the human mind. It is therefore from humans that the solutions must arise.

What is necessary to overcome pollution? We must renounce things that give us trouble and open our hearts and hands in order to give. We must renounce greed, anger and discrimination and narrow thinking. We must open our hearts and give understanding. We must understand another’s feelings, understand another’s life situation and grant others their rights. We must give happiness and forgiveness at the grass-roots level.

Ahimsa paramo dharma means “non-violence is the highest principle”. No one should harm anybody by thoughts, words or actions. The highest obligation for all humans is to protect, not destroy. This means to protect all life, both human and animal. This is why yoga practitioners are vegetarians.

It is not the fault of Governments: Governments can do only what the public supports.

To have sustainable development, we must be attentive and make responsible choices so as to avoid being consumers of goods and services that harm our planet, our relationships and ourselves.

Practising the ancient yogic principles of non-violence, tolerance, protection and service to our brothers and sisters who share this planet helps to develop human culture by awakening an active responsibility towards one’s self, one’s society and the environment.