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Statement submitted by World Family Organization, 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*

Families in balance: embracing the Education for All goals

The present statement was approved by participants of the World Family Summit +6, held in Paris from 3 to 5 December 2010, for submission to the 2011 Economic and Social Council high-level segment and annual ministerial review.

We, Ministers and representatives of Government, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, parliamentarians, private sector, media and families, 269 participants from 72 countries representing all continents, participating in the World Family Summit +6, having fulfilled the Summit agenda with fruitful plenary discussions;

Having considered the theme to be discussed at the 2011 Economic and Social Council high-level segment and annual ministerial review (Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education);

Noting that education is itself a part of human rights and determined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as “directed to the full development of the human personality and to strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”;

Noting that education starts in the family;

Recalling the World Declaration on Education for All, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Recalling the Dakar Framework for Action, approved in April 2000, at the World Education Forum, where a collective commitment to action was established recognizing that achieving the Education for All goals and targets is a collective responsibility through broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by cooperation with regional agencies and institutions;

Reaffirming the commitments made at the Fourth Meeting of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All held in Dakar in 2007, to build alliances among Education for All advocates and other social movements;

Recalling the Declaration of the Ninth Meeting of the High-level Group on Education for All in Addis Ababa in 2010, where reflections on the progress towards Education for All were made, the recent financial crisis, growing marginalization and various forms of exclusions were discussed and the collective capacity of citizens, civil society organizations and social movements to face these challenges were debated;

Supporting the outcome document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit especially regarding the achievement of Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals held in September 2010;

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

Recognizing that early childhood care and education can create the foundation for a life of expanded opportunity, can act as a springboard for success in schools and can provide vulnerable and disadvantaged children with a chance to escape poverty, build a more secure future and realize their potential;

Acknowledging that universal primary education involves entering school at the appropriate age, progressing through the system and completing a full cycle;

Recognizing that while there has been progress made towards greater gender parity in primary school enrolment, being born a girl and in a poor country still carries with it a significant education disadvantage reinforcing the gender inequality in poverty;

Stressing that getting children from ethnic minorities, rural areas, urban slums or areas in conflict or rising conflict into school continues to be a serious challenge;

Bearing in mind that in the twenty-first century global economy, learning and skills play an increasingly important role in shaping prospects in economy growth, shared prosperity and poverty reduction and attaining world class skills is thus the key to economic success and social justice;

Recognizing that illiteracy is a violation of human rights and a global blight on the human condition and its eradication is one of the most urgent development challenges of the twenty-first century;

Recognizing that even though there has been progress towards gender parity in school enrolment, a large gap still persists between male and female literacy that directs girls earlier to household work and early marriage;

Recognizing that the core task of any educational system is to equip young people with the skills they need to participate in social, economic and political life and, to do so, the most important requirement for sustained progress is the improvement of the quality of the learning process, adequate educational systems, school infrastructure and the interaction between students, teachers, civil society and families.

To ensure the achievement of Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and the six goals of the Education for All Movement, all the delegates of the World Family Summit +6 agreed that if we are to succeed in our efforts to build a healthier, peaceful and equitable world, education must take its rightful place among highest priorities of the Millennium Development Goals, partnerships between Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and families must be expanded and a global mobilization towards Education for All must be accelerated.

We unanimously resolve to commit ourselves:

1. To advocate and add efforts to the implementation of national and local actions to improve maternal and child health and nutrition as well as appropriate stimulation starting from the prenatal period of the child as a foundation to obtain positive effects on the growth and cognitive development of all children.
2. To urge decision-making officials at governmental, non-governmental and private sectors support policies in a holistic approach and allocate appropriate budgets for the implementation of early childhood care and education programmes as an investment with definite positive results for the economy and sustainable development of every country.

3. To support in full that early childhood care and education should be approached in a holistic way in order to meet the physical, social, psychological, emotional and intellectual needs of children and their families especially in marginalized families.
4. To promote partnerships among Governments, non-governmental organizations and communities to take charge of their institutional responsibilities in sharing and mutually strengthening policies, strategies, plans, procedures and actions for promoting equitable access to quality early childhood services.
5. Guaranteed, free-of-charge and compulsory access to primary education of good quality while innovative approaches should be applied to disadvantaged children particularly of marginalized families.
6. To design and support special tailored programmes for adolescents who for various reasons have dropped out of school in order to provide them with a second chance to re-enter into the educational system.
7. To raise awareness among Governments, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations and international organizations to the concept of lifelong learning and to promote the implementation of life skills programmes through technical and vocational education for young people and adults which leads to the full development of human potential and to the development of families and society.
8. To support national programmes to face the challenges of youth unemployment motivating the employers and workers organizations, civil society and the private sector to provide technical and vocational programmes to respond to market requirements.
9. To promote adult literacy as a powerful tool for the family well-being and community development, especially focusing on women, integrating adult literacy as part of other lifelong learning programmes.
10. To ensure gender equality in education, integration and women's empowerment for the development of societies. Gender equality in education is fully recognized as a family issue. Breaking the cycle of poverty and illiteracy can be achieved only by educating women, men, boys and girls.
11. To strongly support the joint international efforts to reduce illiteracy among women especially in the least developed countries emphasizing the catalyst role of the family in the dialogue at the community and country levels on gender issues relating to education.
12. To advocate for the continuous interaction of policymakers, educators, academia, families and students focusing on the quality of education.
13. To promote the quality of education and providing equal opportunities and reducing disparities in learning at the country level, improving curriculum contents, teaching skills, management skills of principals and adequate remuneration of teachers in order to enhance their performance and motivation; investment in books, materials and equipment and accountable management systems are of vital relevance to achieve excellence in the learning process and in the quality of education.

14. To urge Governments to prioritize investment in Education for All of no less than 6 per cent of GDP in order to achieve Goal 2 by 2015 as well as providing sufficient and predictable funding to civil society organizations to carry out their education-related activities.

15. To welcome the increasing role of the private sector and philanthropies in funding education policies and programmes.

We welcome all families of the world to join efforts with the United Nations and the World Family Organization to fulfil their commitments towards the Millennium Development Goals following a multi-stakeholder approach and constituting the biggest partnership towards making the present and the future world with more peace, security, justice, tolerance, solidarity and prosperity and integrated by mobilizing and promoting the basic economic, political, sociocultural and sustainable unit of society — the Family.
