



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 December 2013

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-eighth session

10-21 March 2014

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Women’s Board Educational Cooperation Society, 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 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution [1996/31](#).



Statement

Educating children while protecting them from pornography and other harmful influences

Education is present in the Millennium Development Goals, even emphasizing girls in goal 3, although the task of achieving universal primary education (goal 2) is far from being finished. For example, in Nigeria, where our organization operates, according to the on line source www.mdgmonitor.org/factsheets_00.cfm?c=NGA&cd=566, the net enrolment ratio in primary education was only 65 per cent. Education will certainly need to have a prominent place in the upcoming formulation of the sustainable development goals.

In August 2013 the Secretary-General transmitted to the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education ([A/68/294](#)), containing a deep analysis on the relevance of education with an eye to the post-2015 development agenda. The report notes the relationship between a country's development and its public spending on education. In fact, expenditure on education is a long-term investment, reaping high benefits in terms of social advancement. The report states that education needs to be "quality education", understood as being genuine education, not merely attendance at school. Education has to be inspired by a humanistic vision rather than being merely utilitarian. Such education constitutes an essential tool for personal empowerment, poverty eradication, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and citizenship. It opens the door to other human rights, since a person who has not enjoyed the right to education will hardly be able to exercise any other right.

This is the scenario towards which we all aim. Let us imagine that every country can count on educators and institutions equipped to provide such an education and has a Governments committed to funding it. However, the expected positive results are threatened by the aggressive dissemination of pornography and violence on the Internet. Whereas education builds self-control, respect for others and responsible use of sexuality, the widespread availability of online sexual content encourages harmful sexual activity. And whereas education fosters peacemaking, tolerance and pacific coexistence, Internet and video films encourage violent behaviour and disseminate terrorism techniques.

If we do not want the youth to grow up to be perpetrators of sexual harassment and domestic violence, practitioners of sexual promiscuity, drug/alcohol consumers, individuals prone to violence or potential terrorists, let us address the issue of the harmful influences made available to them on the Internet and their mobile phones and in the mass media.

We hear that parents and other educators can make use of e-filters in their homes and schools and on children's gadgets as a preventive measure. But the question is: why should the installation of filters to neutralize harmful material be needed? Is it not more logical to remove such material from the Internet?

Governments should be made accountable for making education available to all their young citizens of school age; and they should also be made accountable for regulating practices on the Internet and in the mass media that attack the values on which education is based.

Minors have the right to be protected from pornography by adequate legislation. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by 193 countries, calls for it. Civil society would do well to advocate this right.
