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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to
achieve sustainable development for all**

Statement submitted by Befa Women and Child Care Foundation, 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Impact of education in eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development in Africa

Poverty eradication around the globe cannot be mentioned without focus on a continent like Africa. However, countries in Africa have continually received interventions from both internal and external sources to enable them rise out of poverty.

The question now is what is perpetuating the cycle of poverty in Africa? Why is poverty still hindering sustainable development in Africa? One of the major underlying issues is fundamentally linked to good quality education. Education is empowering. It strengthens individuals, communities and nations. Working to improve the quality and accessibility of basic education is one of the best and most sustainable investments we can make in our efforts to overcome poverty.

A core objective of BEFA is to protect and enforce the rights of women and children in the society. One of these rights is the right to education. BEFA works to ensure that the right to education is fulfilled, even in the most difficult circumstances and to the most vulnerable groups. The fundamental objective of the BEFA Education Rights program is to confront the barriers that prevent women and children from attaining formal education. It does this by the development of innovative learning solutions and preparing educational systems to fulfil everyone's right to learn. We help vulnerable learners effectively participate in schools, and prepare educational systems to meet the needs of vulnerable students.

Experience shows us that learning attacks poverty at its roots. Educated people can make thoughtful and informed decisions that will positively affect their lives, their families, their communities and their world. Mothers are more likely to have healthier children and higher incomes. We work alongside communities, governments and partner organisations at many levels to address all aspects of basic education. BEFA develops high quality teacher training programs, devise curricula relevant to any particular area and culture and train staff in basic administration and management procedures. BEFA does not only create primary education systems for children, but also accelerates learning programs for adults who never had the opportunity to attend school. Parallel to this, we address local biases that hinder certain groups from attaining formal education. Therefore, BEFA adopts various outreach mediums such sensitisation programs, role models and other enlightenment outreach procedures to ensure that exclusion does not become normalised in the school system.

So far, amongst the 265 women and children that have benefited from the BEFA Education Rights program across Nigeria, 70 percent of the women have commenced very viable and sustainable businesses that have recorded tremendous successes. Twenty percent of the women are in formal employment which has raised them out of poverty completely and 85 percent of the children are excelling academically and are projected to graduate with distinctions.

Challenges: BEFA only has the capacity to reach a small amount of people and currently have supported 2% of Nigeria in realising their educational capacity.

Hence, ensuring that poverty is eradicated to achieve sustainable development cannot be the purview of any single actor. Several actors must come together to achieve a more result and eradicate poverty from its roots.

Recommendations: International bodies like the United Nations, Formal Governments, and Civil Society Organisations should unify to solve this problem. We strongly recommend a unitary committee on the enforcement of rights to education for all people (regardless of race, gender, colour or creed). Parallel to this, schools must be built, books must be secured and teachers trained. The quality of education being provided should be paramount as well. Most importantly, there should be particular emphasis in confronting the attitudes and assumptions that prevent certain groups of individuals from attending and excelling in school.

We strongly believe that education is key to eradicating poverty. An inclusive approach to improve the quality of education is one of the core strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all. This needs to involve linking education programs to interventions in health, nutrition and livelihoods to better address reasons why children are out of school; involving communities in assessing and overcoming their unique barriers to learning, and conducting broad campaigns that promote the right to education for all people.
