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Written statement* submitted by Edmund Rice International (ERI), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[8 February 2013]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Consideration of UPR report for Ghana

Edmund Rice International welcomes the commitment of the government of Ghana to the implementation of human rights in Ghana as exemplified by its acceptance of the majority of recommendations made to it in the 14th session of the UPR.

ERI remains concerned at the high school drop-out rate and unequal access to quality education in Ghana, particularly for vulnerable children and those in the north of the country. We therefore welcome the government of Ghana's commitment to ensuring that equal access to education is a reality in all parts of the country.

ERI is concerned at the growing incidence of drug and alcohol addiction among adolescents in Ghana, and especially at the level of economic and sexual exploitation of children, particularly in the streets and on the shores of lakes. We therefore welcome the acceptance by Ghana of a range of recommendations aimed at the eradication of child labour.

Given the discrimination in education and employment experienced by those with disabilities, and the cultural prejudices that exist in Ghana towards people with disabilities, ERI commends Ghana on its decision to ratify the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and to adopt programmes to sensitize and encourage the community for positive engagement with persons with disabilities.

Recommendations

Whilst acknowledging the positive steps that Ghana is already taking to address these concerns we recommend the Government of Ghana:

- To establish programs to ensure the full participation in education and employment of vulnerable children;
- To develop programmes to close the gaps in educational resources and educational achievement between children from the north and south of the country;
- To establish a Task Force to work closely with the police in bringing to justice those who exploit children and to report to the Government on progress in reducing child exploitation;
- To address the underlying issues of poverty and child abuse and neglect, which lead to the exploitation of vulnerable children, with the aim of reducing such exploitation;
- To promote health education programmes targeting children and youth, with a focus on healthy lifestyles, reducing drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide prevention.