



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Thirtieth session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Child Foundation, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status**

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

[30 August 2015]

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



## **Children's educational rights**

Education is an essential right, which permits each person to receive instruction and to blossom socially. The right to an education is vital for the economic, social and cultural development of all societies. Everyone has the right to education, which should be available free to all at least at the primary level. Education is also indispensable in realizing other human rights.

Education entails that its subjects acquire a variety of knowledge and begins with the acquisition of elementary knowledge --that is to say, literacy-- on the part of the youngest members of society. This is an essential stage which will permit the child to pursue his/her education by integrating secondary and post-secondary instruction.

It also consists of a form of learning that is necessary for the development of one's personality and identity, as well as his physical and intellectual capabilities. Education permits, notably, the transmission of common principles to new generations, and the conservation and perpetuation of social values. It also contributes to the flourishing of individuality through the enhancement of social and professional integration.

Education has as its ultimate objective the improvement of a person's quality of life. It offers to underprivileged adults and children a chance to escape from poverty and thus it is an essential tool for the economic, social and cultural development of all populations around the world.

Education is a human right which ought to be accessible to everyone, without any discrimination. All children must be able to go to school, and thereby benefit from the same opportunities to build a future. Additionally, educational instruction must be equally gratuitous so that children from disadvantaged environments will be able to enjoy their right to an education.

It is the responsibility of countries to guarantee each child's right to an education. They must focus their efforts on primary instruction so as to make schools accessible and free for all children and thus enable them to learn to read and write. But, unfortunately, this is not the reality of our world.

Across the world many children miss out on their education because they are forced to work, they are recruited into armed forces, their families do not have the means to pay for schooling, discrimination and racism undermine their chance to receive an education, or they face violence as they pursue their education.

In many communities, school fees and related costs are a common barrier to education. These charges are a greater burden for children from poor families, and they disproportionately affect those who are racial and ethnic minorities, members of Indigenous communities, and refugees and migrants. Also, Girls are more likely to be excluded from school than boys when there isn't enough money to go round.

Beside these economical barriers, attacks on education occur around the world, both inside and outside of situations of armed conflict. In many regions, armed groups intentionally target schools, teachers, and students. These attacks violate the rights of the child: in addition to putting children at risk of injury or death, they can thwart students' chance to get an education. These attacks can cause children to drop out or go to school less often, force schools to cut their hours, and destroy school buildings and materials. In environments of violence and fear, the quality of children's education is severely diminished.

Today, despite progress toward the international community's goal of universal primary education by 2015, education remains an inaccessible right for millions of children around the world. According to a UNICEF report, 58 million children between the ages of 6 and 11 still lack access to education, while 63 million lower secondary school-age adolescents are also out of school. This report also found that nearly one-third of out-of-school children of lower secondary school age live in conflict-affected countries. Only 65% of children in conflict-affected nations reach the final grade of primary school, in contrast to 86% across other developing countries.

Child Foundation urges the global community to adopt policies that aim to break these five key barriers of the children's education around the world: conflict, gender discrimination, child labor, language challenges and barriers linked to disabilities.

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