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

Written statement* submitted by Al-Ayn Social Care Foundation, 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.

[03 June 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Al-Ayn Social care Foundation written statement for 41st session on the right to education

The right to education, prioritised by Sustainable Development Goal 4 which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, is a guiding principle of the work carried out by Al-Ayn Social Care Foundation. We are an organisation established to ensure that one of the most neglected and forgotten groups of individuals, orphaned children, are empowered and included in Iraqi society, a society that has experienced various forms of conflict and violence in the recent past. We believe that every orphaned child living in poverty as a result of these conditions ought to be given an opportunity to not only survive but thrive, and education, along with lifelong learning, is a key means for achieving that aim.

Through our educational and vocational training programmes, we strive to protect the dignity of orphaned children, in line with Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, by which State Parties agreed that education should be directed to the full development of the human personality and, importantly, the sense of its dignity.

To this end, our Education Department not only facilitates financial assistance to orphaned children, such as contributions towards the costs of tuition when needed (including university fees) and providing financial support for the purchase of school uniforms, but also emotional and moral support when children sit exams, as well as meeting with teachers to follow up on the progress of students.

We are also passionate about promoting lifelong learning opportunities. On that basis, we have established a programme of vocational training. Our first training centre, the 'Luminous Stars' centre, opened in early 2018 and so far 4 groups have completed training there. We run workshops that train individuals in various useful trades such as mobile repair, computing, handicrafts, hairdressing, cookery and more. To ensure that these skills can be effectively applied in reality, we also run life skills courses, such as work ethics and business planning. Furthermore, once individuals graduate from our centre, we continue to provide follow-up support, to ensure that they are truly able to start and succeed in their chosen careers. For example, we assist with micro financing projects to help individuals set up their own businesses.

We are currently setting up 7 more vocational training centres across Iraq to run similar vocational training schemes. Through our work in the field, we have observed that many families have been suffering from a cycle of poverty and lack of opportunities for several generations. Our aim is therefore to provide a rounded training programme to as many orphaned individuals as possible, that instils confidence in them, enabling them to break the cycle of poverty and have hope for a better future.

At Al-Ayn Social Care Foundation, we recognize that the full development of the human personality through education cannot happen in the absence of strong physical, and importantly, mental health. This is in line with Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which requires the education of the child to be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities. For this reason, our training centres also aim to assist orphaned children with mental health issues and psychological needs, given that many of them have lived through conflict, poverty, and lost parents at early stages of their lives, having a devastating impact on their mental well-being. Through our educational support and focus on mental health, we hope to nurture orphaned children so that they can go on to participate effectively in society, as envisaged by Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Our education, psychological rehabilitation and vocational training programmes aim to ensure that the needs of orphaned children are met in a holistic manner that allows for the full development of their personalities and makes them optimistic about what they can achieve in their lives.

We are ready to work with partners in the international community to achieve our shared goal of creating a world where every child receives the education they have a right to.