



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-first session

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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 Akshar 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.

[19 August 2022]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## Statement on the Role of Schools in Achieving Zero Hunger

Akshar Foundation (ECOSOC Special Consultative Status) (1) is a globally-recognized education NGO based in Assam, India, which works to upgrade schools into centers for sustainable development. Thus, schools become centers for children to learn about – and work towards achieving – the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Akshar NEP 2020 Education Model upgrades free government-run schools into centers for sustainable development, by combining conventional academics with practical vocational training and community service projects (food relief, tree-planting, plastic collection and recycling, animal welfare, etc.). For example, during the pandemic, Akshar schools became centers for food relief, with teachers and students working together to identify homes with food insecurity, organizing and delivering 2-week food relief packages to thousands of families (2).

Furthermore, in pursuit of achieving SDG2, Akshar's model school provides students – who are mostly from indigenous tribal backgrounds, and all of them from families below the poverty line —daily mid-day meals, following the example of the Government of India's Midday Meal Scheme (MDM) in government schools, which provides daily meals to some 130 million primary and upper primary school children throughout India (3). Without providing a meal, students are unable to focus on their studies. Thus, the goal of Zero Hunger is a requisite for achieving SDG4: Quality Education. As such, India's MDM is an effective way to boost learning outcomes, enrolment, attendance, in addition to the primary goals alleviating malnutrition, and helping prevent the stunted growth of children.

Akshar is currently partnering with the Government of India as well as UNEP (4) to scale up the Akshar NEP 2020 model in 100 government-run schools, consistent with the Government of India's National Education Policy of 2020 (NEP 2020). We have seen the Government's Midday Meal Scheme in action and can attest to its efficacy in the schools we work in. Many parents enroll their children in government schools for the sole purpose of availing meals and food rations.

The Government of India is proving that it takes seriously its obligations under Article 24(c) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Considering the ambition of such an undertaking and witnessing the ground-level reality, it is our belief that the India's Midday Meal Scheme, the largest food drive in the world (5), should be celebrated and upheld as a model for other member states.

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1. <https://www.aksharfoundation.org>

2. <https://www.eastmojo.com/ourcoronafighters/2020/04/02/how-an-assam-school-is-helping-needy-people-amid-covid-19-crisis>

3. [http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01506/WEB/0\\_\\_C-169.HTM](http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01506/WEB/0__C-169.HTM)

4. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/can-plastic-bottle-be-ticket-education-india-yes>

5. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/25/asia/midday-meals-write>