



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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 Society for Protection of Street & Working Children, 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.

[02 February 2020]

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



## **Children have the right to a healthy environment**

According to Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children and young people should be able to live in a way that helps them reach their full physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social potential. For this to happen, they should have access to adequate food and housing.

Childhood is one of the most important periods of life for every human being. All values, beliefs, behaviors, fears, hatreds, ingenuity and personality of the individuals are formed during this period and if there are dark points and sufferings in childhood, it will affect all stages of the future life of the child.

The environment is one of the most important factors affecting children's behavior. If the child's living environment is unhealthy, the child will be quickly attracted toward unhealthy behaviors, will have to tolerate the consequences and the damages to his or her mental and/or physical health will be difficult to cure. Children are dynamic beings, but to protect their own rights, they need the support of their parents.

The family, the community and educational centers play an important role in child development. The right of all children to enjoy a healthy environment should be realized with the support of the States and families who have a duty to provide children with a decent standard of living.

Children are vulnerable to environmental pollution, especially air pollution and other harmful factors in their lives. Obviously, in order to achieve the growth and excellence of children, their needs and rights must be taken into account, and these factors have an enormous impact on children with vulnerabilities. Poverty is a painful phenomenon that destroys human society and it is everyone's duty to contribute to reduction or eradication of poverty. We are all responsible for the fate of other people.

For many years, due to sanctions and the escalation of economic sanctions that increase social and economic pressures, our country has been suffering from internal forced migration to large cities and their suburbs. The migrants who live in the margins of cities are faced with poverty, injustice, income inequality, unemployment and lack of legal protection for affected families that lead to child labor and sends children to the streets to earn money for their families in a way that the number of children on the streets has increased in recent years due to severity of the crises.

Unfortunately, because children are not prepared for work they are often insulted and humiliated by citizens, which hurts children's feelings, separates them from the people and the society and makes them suffer from psychiatric disorders that may cause irreparable harm to the children or push them to harm others in the future. Therefore, Society for Protection of Street & Working Children (SPWSC) calls on the United Nations' Human Rights Council (HRC) to adopt effective measures to stop the destructive economic sanctions against our country that seriously harm the children especially the street children.

Unfortunately, due to lack of awareness raising in the society, people do not treat street children as "a child." This is while, street children experience life just like the other children and in the process, their self-esteem and self-confidence are hurt making them suffer from psychological crisis.

SPWSC, which has been working for street children and adolescents who have been affected and harmed for nearly two decades, attaches great importance to education of these children, with thoughtful training based on efficient scientific models and encourages children to empower themselves. SPWSC believes that children's education and training should be tailored to their natural needs to help them flourish.

One of the first activities of SPWSC was establishment of vocational training and education centers in accordance with world-class standards. The centers are called "Mehr homes" which are created for deprived and out-of-school children in disadvantaged areas and for marginalized families. Mehr homes are one of the strong points of SPWSC.

One of the advantages of Mehr Homes is that most immigrant families welcome and trust the safe environment and allow their children, especially girls to attend the safe and high-

standard education centers. Working children come to the Mehr homes for recreation and play, where they get engaged in art and sports activities, during the daytime and after school hours to spend a happy time there and enjoy the experience of a better childhood.

Establishing centers in places where children live in the street give us a better understanding of the context and structure of the local community. The proximity of the centers to the living place of the children reduces environmental harms to them and this is another advantages of SPWSC. Mehr homes are run with the participation and cooperation of the children's parents and educators, all working towards the same goal.

SPWSC focuses on environmental factors that may harm children, and offers them formal education, life skills and personal hygiene - how to protect themselves against germs and bacteria. Considering the contamination of urban environments, and long hours of children's stay in the streets, SPWSC teaches them about self-care, security, and how to cross the street. SPWSC provides children who scavenge with education, and hygiene kits. It should be mentioned that training experienced teachers is always at the top of the Society's agenda.

Today, our environment is at greater risk than ever before, the environment that is essential to the social, economic, and political life of every human being. So we have a mission to ensure a healthy sustainable and suitable environment for children who are the future generation of the society because every country needs healthy and efficient people in order to grow and develop, therefore, SPWSC tries to teach the children to consider protecting their healthy environment as a personal responsibility.

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