



# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission on Population and Development

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**Population, technology and research in the context of  
sustainable development**

### **Statement submitted by Women’s Health and Education Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council<sup>1</sup>**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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<sup>1</sup> The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **Achieving quality education and universal health coverage for 2030 Agenda**

Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC) addresses this issue by reinforcing the coordination among key international organizations and national actors working on sustainable development policies and framework, by bringing more coordinated support to UN Member States. Equally important, the global WHEC's initiatives in advocacy, recommendations and implementation on its global platform (<http://www.WomensHealthSection.com>), support authorities at country level to elaborate strategies, which will strengthen national networks to ensure access to affordable and reliable modern internet and energy for all, to improve better access to quality education and healthcare facilities.

WHEC's publications are aimed at a broad range of audience, and it is hoped that everyone who reads this, will come away with a realization of the complexity of the issues at stake and an appreciation of the work that lay in front of us.

The world continues to advance towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nevertheless, the current pace of progress is insufficient to achieve SDGs by 2030. Improvements in energy efficiency, for example, will need to accelerate to reach the climate goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Hundreds of millions of people still lack access to the internet and electricity, and slow progress towards clean cooking solutions means that the health of 2.4 billion people is at risk. Huge disparities in access to modern sustainable energy persist, leaving the most vulnerable even further behind.

COVID-19 pandemic has weakened or reversed advances in some countries. Rising commodity, energy and shipping prices have increased the cost of producing and transporting solar photovoltaics modules, wind turbines and biofuels worldwide, adding uncertainty to a development trajectory that is already far below most of SDG ambitions. Achieving energy and climate goals will require continued policy support and a massive mobilization of public and private capital for clean and renewable energy, especially in developing countries.

### **A step towards Leaving No One Behind**

This program provides the solutions needed by governments and their partners to increase investment in health facility electrification efforts. For too long, a lack of reliable power has prevented people in underserved parts of Africa and Asia from accessing the quality healthcare and education they need. Despite energy being a key input for positive health outcomes, many rural clinics across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are completely without or have irregular power supply. Ensuring health facilities have reliable electricity – saves lives.

WHEC's projects and programs bring governments and the health, education and development sectors closer together to develop solutions, is even more important now, than before. Our initiatives focus on:

1. To build the evidence base for powering healthcare facilities, particularly related to sector intelligence/mapping and impact research (health impact and multiplier effect).
2. To raise awareness and educate stakeholders about the need and opportunity to provide better health services by powering healthcare facilities.
3. To develop new ideas and solutions that address critical barriers to the wide-scale and sustainable adoption of distributed clean energy solutions

in healthcare facilities such as scalable and sustainable business models, policy and planning, and technical standards and quality assurance frameworks.

4. To strengthen the cooperation and knowledge exchange among health, education and energy players, at both the global and country level.
5. To provide technical assistance and strategic advisory to governments and their development partners in priority countries to support ongoing and planned large-scale health facility electrification programs.

### **Advocacy and communication: knowledge generation and dissemination**

WHEC's Global Health Line – accessible in 227 countries and territories, to all UN Member States and academic institutions, in both developing countries and developed countries – raises awareness and educate stakeholders about the need and opportunities to provide better health services by empowering vulnerable populations, via:

- High-level events;
- Media campaigns; and
- Knowledge and Resource Hubs.

We must implement comprehensive and inclusive policies, change our way of thinking, and prioritize efforts to eliminate poverty and bridge the digital divide. It is crucial for governments to integrate social, economic, and environmental policies to promote social justice.

### **Women's Health and Education Center's response framework**

Social justice requires healthcare, education, food, water, housing, employment, social protection, and digital technology that no one is left behind. WHEC's initiatives with UN, WHO and UNESCO aim to address the underlying causes of poverty and inequality, in a world where it is estimated that more than 600 million people still live in extreme poverty.

WHEC focuses on the importance of supporting those countries and communities that host large number of refugees, promoting the inclusion of refugees in host communities, ensuring the involvement of development actors from an early stage, and developing a 'whole-of-society' approach. Its four key objectives are to:

1. Ease the pressures on host countries and communities;
2. Enhance refugee self-reliance;
3. Expand third-country solutions; and
4. Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity

Our recommendations for improving quality education and universal health access are:

- We must act fast to achieve incremental progress on electricity and internet access.
- Thanks to the greater investment – Asia's progress has been underpinned by finance, with Central and Southern Asia seeing the largest growth in annual average public financial flow, with a close to 6-fold increase in the last decade.
- Sub-Saharan Africa is falling further behind on energy and internet access and efficiency. In the last decade, population growth has outpaced new clean

cooking access, resulting in 50 per cent more people without access to clean cooking solutions in the region.

- Modern renewables and energy efficiency are pillars of a clean energy transition that supports development – this should be scaled up.
- Improve collaboration, coordination and effectiveness of relevant activities of the network participants.
- Share lessons-learned, results and impacts, and new opportunities regarding the energy compacts on a real-time basis.
- Apply dynamic monitoring frameworks, providing transparency in tracking progress on the energy compacts.
- Mobilize additional energy compacts to match the ambition of Global Roadmap.

We are motivated by our significant achievements in expanding access to evidence-based health information on our global platform for the last two decades – we will ensure that the provision of access to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) of free, publicly-privately funded, equitable quality primary and secondary education, of which at least 10 years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes. We are committed to supporting gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments; mainstreaming gender issues in teacher training and curricula; and eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence in schools.

Join in our efforts.

We welcome everyone!

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