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Statement submitted by Women's Health and Education Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council¹

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.

¹ The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Rethinking the purpose and content of education for the 21st century: Our efforts

Education is a fundamental human right. It has long held a special place in the hearts and minds of people across the world, and for good reasons. It is a great enabler, but today, in many ways, it is also a great divider. This is a universal challenge, most intense in emergency settings and in the developing countries. The crisis in education, however, runs much deeper and goes beyond the challenge of equity and equality. Young people and adults alike report that it does not equip them with the knowledge, experience, skills, or values needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Learning continues to underplay skills, including problem solving, critical thinking and empathy. Teachers are often poorly trained, undervalued, and underpaid, and are held back by outdated roles, methods, and tools of instruction. Parents and families decry the value of lack of return on the investments they make in education and their children.

The COVID-19 pandemic both exacerbated and illuminated this crisis. The central promise of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 – Quality Education – is denied to millions of learners. Our first task is swift and targeted action to recover the learning losses inflicted by the pandemic, particularly on the marginalized groups. Women’s Health and Education Center (WHEC) with its partners and with the support of UNESCO, is actively reimagining education systems and promoting to raise the status of education. We must ensure that learning empowers individuals and societies, to both reshape the present and lead us to a more just, sustainable, resilient, and peaceful future. WHEC’s efforts and initiatives encourage teachers, administrators and managers to fundamentally rethink purpose, curricula, and universal access to equip the learners with early childhood education – *Learn to learn*.

Our projects and programs make a strong case for a new social contract for education grounded in two principles: ensuring the right to quality education throughout life; and strengthening education as a public endeavor and a common good. The pursuit of gender equality and the rights of women, girls, and minorities remains a crucial goal of the WHEC, since its inception. Our e-Learning, e-Health and e-Government Initiative: <http://www.WomensHealthSection.com> was launched on 24 October 2002 in collaboration with the Department of the Public Information of the United Nations, and it is available in six official languages of the United Nations. It is serving with pride in 227 countries and territories, to about 12 to 13 million subscribers every year. Our educational programs ensure that students are prepared for the future in both life and the workforce, with a focus on skilling, reskilling and upskilling – *Learn to do* (Improving Global Partnerships for Education and Health|High-Level Political Forum 2022 (un.org); <https://hlpf.un.org/2022/programme/improving-global-partnerships-for-education-and-health>).

WHEC supports capacity building for e-Health and e-Government applications worldwide and looks forward to developing the use of norms and standards with the World Health Organization (WHO). We aim to reach Least Developed Countries (LDCs) identified by the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), to disseminate *Reproductive Health Research* and evidence-based information. WHEC provides free access to online e-Learning/e-Health to LDCs. LINK Access Project encourages national health and educational systems to contribute towards continued education at all levels with the goals of improving maternal and child health, providing culturally appropriate contraception counseling information and availability, preventing teen pregnancies and ending child marriages and violence against women and children. <http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/documents/LINK-Access-Project.pdf>.

In 2021, Women’s Health and Education Center (WHEC) launched, a new initiative for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 4, 5: ***Learning Life Lessons Series***. These so-called **Life Lessons** include decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, self-esteem, communication, self-assessment and coping strategies. People with such skills are more likely to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Each new generation of children faces challenges, but those being dealt with by today’s youth seem particularly daunting. Children at an early age are confronted by situations that require decision-making skills for preventive actions – *Learn to live together and learn to be*.

This quarterly publication in *WHEC Update* is giving teachers tools for child development to acquire the basic skills needed and to create Programs for Youth Development (PYD) in their institutions (schools and universities). The connection between education, health and earning capacity is better understood. By supporting our teachers and students, we can lay the foundations for true social and economic development everywhere. The purpose of this publication / series is to plan and develop:

- To help teachers improve the learning-skills of students,
- To help boys and girls to stay in school, continue to stay focused on the productive future and be global citizens,
- To encourage girls, women and minorities in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine),
- To improve their learning potential, and
- To help students learn the skills they need for leadership roles and to be good role models for others.

Helping students and supporting them in their quest to make their lives better, helps to improve the communities too. And that is our mission. The healthy future of society depends on the literacy and health of today’s children, who are the guardians of the future. Every academic area can give examples of how the materials being taught can be used to make the world better place to live. We encourage institutions to use this as a resource to increase engagement, learning and good mental health.

Our projects and/programmes are helping schools and universities all around the globe to plan and develop:

1. Health-promoting schools;
2. Programs for youth development (PYD);
3. Mental health programs to prevent gender and gun violence;
4. How to handle life’s challenges for good mental health

Harnessing the digital revolution for the benefit of public education

If harnessed properly, the digital revolution can be one of the most powerful tools for ensuring quality education for all, and transform the way teachers teach and learners learn. If not governed properly, it could exacerbate inequalities and undermine learning outcomes, as the pandemic made all too apparent. Countries should take rapid actions toward full educational connectivity to their population. WHEC will continue to support country actions, and strengthen inclusive digital learning platforms and content, worldwide.

Quality education is the single most important investment that any country can make for its future and for its people. Investing in education is investing in people and in our collective future. This is a moral, political and economic imperative.

It is, indeed, our privilege to share with you the UN document [E/CN.9/2022/NGO/2](http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/documents/E_CN9_2022_NGO_2.pdf): Making science and technology work better for inclusive economic growth; published by the 55th Session of Commission on Population and Development (CPD). Also available at http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/documents/E_CN9_2022_NGO_2.pdf.

We welcome everyone. Please share with us your experiences, projects and programs; and join us on WHEC Global Health Line (WGHL) (http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/cme/WHEC_Global_Health_Line.pdf).

Our common agenda and our common goal!
