

Delegation from the Republic of Armenia

Position Paper for the United Nations Economic and Social Council

The topics to be discussed before the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) are: I. Education in Post Conflict Situations; II. Implementing SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All and III. Promoting the Political, Socioeconomic, and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Republic of Armenia (RA) is alarmed by the fact that almost 246 million children and adolescents are not able to enjoy the right to education. Current data shows that if the present trend will not be changed, we will see more than 400 million children not having acquired schooling past the age of 11 by 2030. Thus, we would highly encourage the council to discuss the topics in the following order: I. first, followed by II. and III.

I. Education in Post Conflict Situations

The RA is very much concerned about the situation in post conflict regions regarding the assurance of the right to education. Those regions are predominated by political, social and economic instability. Especially the field of education suffers in conflicts and ends up with long term concerns, as e.g. schools, universities or other educational institutions are often made dysfunctional or used for other means. If this issue is not solved, it will make the global community unable to realize the *Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4* till 2030. The UN has prioritized education, which is why integral actions have been taken to facilitate the access to it. The Right to Education is a basic human right embedded in several UN documents. "Everyone has the right to education" are the first words in Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), which was endorsed by the General Assembly (GA) resolution 217A (1948). A safe education environment is a priority for Armenia, which is why together with subsidies of the UN, the European Union (EU) and NGOs we founded the program Advancing National and Local Efforts to Reduce Disaster Risk to Children South Caucasus and Central regional programme (DIPECHO Phase IV). A success of this program was the creation of a website (safe.schoolnet.am), where the preparedness of emergency situation of all schools is listed in detail. This can help identify improvable features in schools. The RA recognizes education as a determining factor, hence we want to put our endeavors towards solving the problems. In post conflict areas funding is necessary to keep education institutes functioning. As it is often the case in crisis areas, aid is mainly used for resources like shelter and food. We would like to recommend to the GA to advise all Member States (MS) and NGOs that there also needs to be a bigger focus on funding education. Hence, there is a need to further promote partnership with the recently established first international fund committed to education, the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Fund. NGOs together with public and private donors and other actors created the fund during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 with the purpose of closing the existing 8.5% funding gap. Our second focus is set on marginalized groups, especially women, who find it more difficult to have access to knowledge in post conflict situations. To enable them to exercise their rights, we would like the GA to recommend to MS by fostering dialogue to strengthen their partnership with the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), which was brought into life in the World Education Forum in Dakar (2000). With its experience it can provide a set of strategies that focuses on policy advocacy efforts. The importance of education curricula's is vital and our pressing issue. As children and adolescents often come out of crisis with damages to their mental health, it is important to offer counselors who are trained to their specific needs. Thus, Armenia would like to suggest to the GA together with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) work on creating a platform, where experienced school counselors can apply on a voluntary basis to be appointed at a school, which is in need of one. After going through an application procedure, the chosen volunteer should have the opportunity to get trained and gain knowledge about post conflict areas through a local UN office. The volunteer contract should be at least six months long. At the end, volunteers should receive an adequate certificate from UNICEF. We are convinced that this solution will help the cause as it will tackle the main problems by assuring proper funding, the inclusion of women and a focus on the importance of mental health.

II. Implementing SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

The RA receives it as a matter of utmost urgency that the current efforts and actions taken for the SDG 7 to "ensure access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All" will not suffice to meet its targets in all MS by 2030. Although from 2010 till 2016 the international community was able to boost the access to electricity by ca. 10%, 1 billion people still (?) lack access. This fact, especially in rural areas, pushes people to obtain their electricity from an expensive origin, which often may only

offer unsustainable energy, such as diesel or oil - sources that are harmful to one's health and the environment. 41% of the world's population is still using hazardous energy sources e.g. to cook. As aforementioned was early recognized by the UN as a concern that needs to be solved rapidly, many actions have been taken for respective matter. The SDGs, which were adopted by all UN members in 2015 through GA resolution 70/1 (2015), include the aim of ensuring affordable and clean energy for everyone till 2030. This aim was further promoted in the *Paris Agreement* of 2015 by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) decision 1/CP.21, which notes the importance of renewable energy as a fundamental strategy to solve climate change. A mentionable initiative is *Sustainable Energy for All* (SEforALL). SEforALL came into life in 2011 with the goal to create Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and equip MS with the relevant Know-How to realize SDG 7. This is specifically done through its Knowledge Hub, which is designed to observe the advancement of projects dedicated towards ensuring sustainable energy and to investigate in more advanced solutions. The RA is experienced in sustainable energy, as it has realized its potential with e.g. solar energy and consequently taken actions to gain benefits from it. For instance, one third of the RA's land is installed with solar energy resources. We recognize the economic advantages of PPPs, thus we have collaborated with several companies in order to provide renewable energy through wind, solar or hydro power. To accelerate the target of SDG 7 we would mainly like to recommend to the ECOSOC to resort to the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy of the *United Nations Economic Commission for Europe* (ECE) for the purpose of assessing which potential a state might have regarding renewable energy sources. These groups can help countries who requested aid regarding qualitative expertise on how to produce renewable energy. Moreover, we would suggest to the GA to stress the benefits of PPPs and encourage least developed countries (LDCs) to find PPPs and monitor them with the help and competence of SEforALL. Herewith we would also recommend the LCDs to resort to the ECE's Standard on Public-Private Partnerships in Renewable Energy. It will be a helpful guide for governments in need of policy suggestions, while working on PPPs. Also, we suggest the GA to again emphasize the alarming fact that the current progress being done is still not enough to achieve the goals the UN MS set for the year 2030. The RA is optimistic about making the future of energy affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern.

III. Promoting the Political, Socioeconomic, and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In consideration of the recent dreadful incident, where a member of an indigenous tribe, namely the Omaha Nation, was bullied and discriminated by a group of young adolescents in the United States, the RA wants to emphasize on the rights of a great number of native communities living in over 90 countries. As afore mentioned indigenous people are still being targeted because of their culture and beliefs. Moreover, it can still be identified that their socioeconomic and political rights are being limited, hence there is a lot of place for improvement when it comes to the international community and national governments promoting their rights. In 2000, through resolution 2000/22, the ECOSOC established a standing body, namely the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), which since then plays an integral role advising the ECOSOC on indigenous affairs. Thereby the more active participation of indigenous peoples was made possible and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) was drafted by the UNPFII in 2007 and later endorsed by the GA. The RA had voted in favor of adopting UNDRIP, which documents all basic rights indigenous peoples are entitled to, such as right to land, to self-determination, right to political participation and more. Armenia feels very content about the year 2019 being titled as *the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages*. We see this year as a great chance to promote the rights of indigenous communities, as it will not only create awareness about the respective topic but also e.g. promote the inclusion of indigenous languages in daily life and public administration. Furthermore, it will increase the understanding between all groups of society. Armenia believes that the key to improve the current situation for native peoples is to help them engage more actively in all stages of society and also to facilitate and promote the mutual knowledge and understanding. Therefore, the RA suggests to the GA to propose to the UNPFII to establish a forum, which will take place annually on every 9th August, on the *International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples*. This forum shall be held in 3-4 different cities, of different regions with greater population of indigenous peoples. Its aim shall be to work as an information and networking day for indigenous peoples and their rights. It would be a great opportunity and platform for those communities to present themselves and show their great traditions. It will also increase awareness and create the possibility of doing local fundraising events. This money can be used to hire indigenous peoples to hold talks or workshops which deal with education on indigenous cultures for instance in regional ECOSOC or UN offices. This solution approach will certainly aid in effectively settling the respective concern by providing a forum which will increase the recognition value of indigenous peoples and their right of equality before law.