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Statement submitted by IBREA Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

From IBREA Foundation's perspective, what we should focus on to achieve inclusiveness and equality is the human mind, peoples' mind.

For people to be empowered and included, our minds need to come together. There needs to be a common ground in terms of mindset and purpose. Then everybody can thrive. When we share the same vision and we wholeheartedly care for it, we can move beyond competition and bring the best out of each one of us for that one vision. In that scenario, everybody becomes essential and has an important and unique role to play. That, to us, results in real empowerment, inclusiveness and equality.

The challenge becomes to agree on our central values. What do we all care about? What do all focus on? Where are we all heading towards? Currently, the central values for each individual and country differ. We have selfish desires that only lead to exclusion. But this is not a natural state of mind. In fact, it is increasingly being proven by neuroscience that the human brain has an innate tendency towards empathy and collaboration. The brain likes balance, it doesn't like imbalance. And it likes collective progress. It is not prone to violence or poverty, or discrimination. But due to experiences and external pressures, many of us have lost our balance and this is what is causing disruption in society. What we need to do is recover that balance. And for that recovery, the key is education.

Through education, we must establish our shared problems as our focus of attention i.e. the SDGs – whether we are rich or poor, one nationality or the other, one religion or the other. We can all focus on the SDGs when making choices for in our daily lives – the food we eat, the words we say, the actions we take, how we manage our resources, how we educate our kids etc. Our Earth's and Humanity's most pressing problems should be embedded in everyone's consciousness as something we sincerely care about – not as a moral obligation, but rather from the heart. That is what IBREA Foundation offers: education to develop our human integrity and character, our collaboration with others, and expand our brain functions to focus on what truly matters, what is essential for all of us.

We believe that this approach can be applied to all the prioritized goals in the 2019 HLPF i.e. education (Goal 4), economic growth (Goal 8), reducing inequality (Goal 10), combatting climate change (Goal 13), peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16), and global partnerships (Goal 17). When we value the mind more than the skills or talents, then everybody has a chance, both in school and in the workplace, and everybody can contribute to social and economic growth, creating more wealth overall. Additionally, this shift in central values will not only lead to reducing inequality and ensuring peace in our societies, but also protect our planet and strengthen global partnerships.