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Statements submitted by organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council *

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

Theme: Building Back Better from the Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) while Advancing the Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

44. Indian Dreams Foundation

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc resulting in more than 0.5 million deaths across India till April 2022. It has created medical emergencies and affected the livelihood opportunities of millions, negatively impacting education, especially for girls, and gender equality. This circumstance has shaken the ongoing efforts of all Developing Economies, including India, toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 on Quality Education and SDG 5 on Gender Equality.

Due to the local industries coming to a standstill in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, several slum dweller families and daily wage workers were affected. As the medical emergency and food became priorities, children's education, especially girl children, took a backseat. Adding to it, gender disparities and gender-based violence were quite rampant. For years, the Indian Dreams Foundation has been working with slum-dwelling communities of Agra and had its ears close to the ground and was swift to respond to this humanitarian crisis. The Indian Dreams Foundation reached over 3,500 families across three districts in Uttar Pradesh and ensured dry ration, nutrition, and sanitation kits through its outreach programs. Through other ongoing programs like "Honhar Ladki", "Smiley Days", and "Ready to school", the Indian Dreams Foundation ensured supporting these J&J communities in Agra with the continuation of education, especially for girls and improving their overall health and well-being. The Indian Dreams Foundation has got Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC (United Nations) since 2013.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, the Indian Dreams Foundation received over 200 inquiries for Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) related issues through its helpline. IDF also conducted workshops for information dissemination on SRHR and MHM. IDF distributed over 5,000 hygiene kits and 40,000 sanitary napkins to adolescent girls and underserved women. The IDF team's efforts also saved the future of 10 young girls who were being forced into early child marriage. The team efforts via the "Smiley days" and "Honhar Ladki" (an education sponsorship and mentoring program to support adolescent girls) programs continue to impact the lives of many young women and girls from the underserved communities by reducing school dropouts and enabling young girls to continue their education. "I feel proud that I have become the first person in my family to complete 12th standard, and I have a dream to become a teacher. Thanks, IDF, for helping me to see my dreams and sponsoring my education," says Sangeeta (one of the beneficiaries of Honhar Ladki).

It is essential to lay utmost importance on the issue of education (especially girls' education), health, and gender equality in the post-COVID-19 recovery scenario in India, to which IDF is truly committed and has the requisite capacities for effectively advancing the full implementation of SDG 4 and SDG 5 in Agra (Uttar Pradesh) aligning to its vision of "A healthy, educated and developed society".