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Statement

by

**Ambassador Sun Joun-yung
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Korea
to the United Nations**

on

**The contribution of human resources development,
including in the areas of health and education
to the process of development**

at

**The Economic and Social Council
Substantive Session of 2002**

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Mr. President,

Given the valuable ideas generated and insightful opinions exchanged yesterday at the high-level policy dialogue and roundtables, I welcome this opportunity to speak further on the topic of health and education in the context of human resources development.

Mr. President,

Having witnessed the rapid transition to development firsthand in my own country over the last decades, I strongly believe that improving human resources through health and education is crucially important for overall economic development. Indeed, if we are committed to achieving the ambitious development goals set by the Millenium Declaration, social sector expenditure must be recognized as a direct investment in economic growth.

The creation of a stable labor force through improved health is fundamental to the overall development process. I fully endorse the report of the Secretary-General in its call for long-term local capacity building, ensuring equitable access to health services, fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic, promoting international investment in global public goods, and guaranteeing access to essential medicines. As was discussed at the roundtables yesterday, a massive investment in the health sector is necessary to strengthen healthcare systems in a way that will favorably impact the poorest and most vulnerable around the world.

While health is the most fundamental prerequisite for development, education is the most effective investment in developing human resources. The international community's commitment to universal primary Education for All (EFA) will help establish balanced social progress in the developing world. In order to achieve this

goal of EFA, we must take measures to eliminate any form of gender discrimination or disparity in access to education. This is particularly important, as higher levels of education for mothers have shown lower rates of mortality, morbidity and malnutrition in their children. Furthermore, improving and continuing training for teachers, effectively collecting data on schools and creating curricula responsive to current global trends, *inter alia*, are necessary if we expect to maximize the benefits of education for the development of human resources.

In creating strategies to meet health and education challenges, it is important to harness the synergies between the two areas in a way that will build momentum in the direction of progress and prosperity. The School Feeding programme, for example, combines health and education objectives to improve children's present state of health with nutritious food, while providing for their future with education. Moreover, the "education vaccine" against HIV/AIDS utilizes the dissemination of knowledge to protect against infection. Such synergistic initiatives are not only successful in reinforcing a virtuous circle of development, but also prove to be cost-effective and efficient.

As we have seen in my country, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can be a powerful, cost-effective means of promoting economic growth through human resources development. Investing in ICT training helps to establish a labor force able to keep pace with the emerging opportunities in the global economy. Additionally, the utilization of ICT for health services and education in innovative fields such as tele-medicine and remote learning is encouraging. However, as ICT is a tool that requires advanced skills and costly infrastructure for full efficacy, it cannot be used universally in developing countries. Given these limitations, developed countries with significant ICT infrastructure and knowledge bases should find innovative ways to provide technological assistance and training to the less developed countries.

In a more fundamental contribution, developed countries must assist developing countries to mobilize the resources necessary to achieve the comprehensive goals for human resources development. As has been underscored in the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, developed and developing countries must participate in a new partnership in which they share responsibilities and obligations. It is the primary responsibility of the state to commit significant domestic resources to health services and education. However, when national efforts are not sufficient for development, developed countries must provide the resources to fill in the gaps. Additionally, a South-South cooperation must be fostered so that an exchange of experience and ideas will help developing nations overcome similar obstacles.

In conclusion, I would like to touch upon several ways to effectively implement health and education programmes that were suggested in the Secretary-General's report. First of all, we must monitor the progress of implementation in a regular and reliable way to ensure efficacy. This is particularly true in the implementation of health and education programmes where success can be monitored through quantifiable indices, such as mortality and enrollment. Additionally, we must continually establish and adapt programmes that reflect advances in globalization and technology. Moreover, since a programme that is successful in one country, may not necessarily bring the same results in another, it is important to tailor programmes to a country's specific culture, needs and existing resources. Finally, we must ensure cooperation and coordination between all participating international agencies, governments and civil society in order to maximize our limited resources.

We hope that this high-level segment of the Council will give valuable political impetus to the role of human resources development in the overall development process.

Thank you.