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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to
achieve sustainable development for all**

Statement submitted by Concepts of Truth, 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 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Eradicating Poverty through Education: Increasing Wealth through Sexual Health

According to Amina J. Mohammed, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General, “The international community has yet to recognise the full potential of education as a catalyst for development.” In fact UNESCO claims sustainable development begins with education. Education is the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty in keeping with SDG 1 and the priority theme of the 55th Session of the Commission for Social Development, “Strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all.” Statistics show that poverty increases women’s vulnerability to, among other things, sexual exploitation and resulting sexually transmitted diseases.

Regrettably, HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death for women of reproductive age worldwide. Educating young women reduces the risk of HIV infection as well as that of other sexually transmitted infections (STI’s). Thus, new HIV infections declined globally by about 40 per cent between 2000 and 2013 as those with more education tended to take more precautions. Progress has been uneven, however, as higher-risk sex (i.e. sex with a non-marital, no-cohabitating partner) and insufficient knowledge about HIV and STI’s remain at high levels, especially in the sub-Saharan Africa. This evidence has been supported the Millennium Development Goals Report (2015, pp 44-45). According to the World Health Organisation STI’s have a significant impact on sexual and reproductive health with an estimated 357 million new infections of STI’s worldwide.

Concepts of Truth International (COTI) recognises the power of education in addressing issues related to sexual and reproductive health. COTI’s model of counselling, recovery and prevention educates clients to develop the whole person and to instill in each individual a due sense of dignity as the basis for sexual health. In the state of Arkansas, USA, Concepts of Truth International has been actively involved in teaching the Concepts of Sexual Health, Sex and You project in the area public schools since 2009. According to the Arkansas 2013 State Health profile, Arkansas ranked 9th for Syphilis, 7th for Chlamydia and 7th for Gonorrhoeal infections in the United States. The state has improved in its ranking in the 2015 report profile. Arkansas now ranks 10th for Syphilis, 8th for Chlamydia and 11th for Gonorrhoeal infections.

COTI’s sexual health school curriculum promotes sexual and reproductive health and reconciles important facts about sexual and reproductive well-being with basic truths about human life and dignity. The purpose of the curriculum is to teach that the human person exists as a multidimensional being and that one’s sexuality is integrated in all the dimensions. As human beings, we have the capacity to reason, make choices, seek what is true, and to ask questions of ultimate significance. The lessons in the curriculum stress that one’s sexual health depends on the choice to save sex for marriage or one monogamous bond and on making healthy choices in relationships, love and responsibility. These choices affect the whole person’s present and future well-being as well as their progeny.

Sex is more than an isolated act; it is more than a bodily function; it is not just a commodity to buy or sell. Sexual health education must appeal to the dispositions of the mind, heart, will and conscience of the learner. Young people can be reached through their hearts and challenged to become persons of character, capable of contributing not only to their own well-being but also to their communities and society with a right understanding of sexuality.

As Onalee McGraw, Ph.D, founder of the Educational Guidance Institute explains, “As whole persons, men and women possess a sexuality that is integrated in body, mind, heart, will and conscience. The sexual domain is permeated by the intellectual, moral, emotional, physical, and social domains. The psychological guiding principle is that cognitive powers of memory, thought, judgment, imagination, and learning related to sexuality permeate the body, mind, heart, will and conscience; thinking, feeling and acting in the sexual domain reflect the whole person.”

The premise of the whole person learning theory is foundational for Concepts of Sexual Health, Sex and You. The resources included in this curriculum are based on medical facts as well as statistics from the Center for Disease Control & Prevention. They are developmentally appropriate for 9-12th grades.

Those who have benefitted from the program speak highly of their experiences and share what they have learned from the curriculum:

“Well from this program I learned that having sex while you’re young can cause a lot of health consequences. Overall I think this program just saved a lot of lives including my own.”

“I learned a lot from this program. I learned how to stay pure and true to myself as a person. It taught me to be sexually healthy in many different ways, so I thank them for giving me a better understanding about sexual health.”

Because promiscuous sexual behavior and ignorance concerning safe sex and STDS are common, it is crucial that Concepts of Sexual Health, Sex and You is widely promoted for many to gain understanding and wisdom in such areas, to advance education, helping to bring an end to poverty worldwide.

Concepts of Truth, Inc. recommends that Member States and this Commission:

- Endorse education and awareness campaigns on the value of education;
- Enact policies requiring accountability from member states to educate in sexual health programs which incorporate the whole person learning theory;
- Allow measures that any and all sexual health material distributed worldwide include the principles set forth in Concepts of Sexual Health Sex & You as a strategy to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development for all.

If the Commission for Social Development and Member States implement these recommendations, we believe the citizens who choose to participate will be empowered to increase their wealth through sexual health. This strategy is an effective and low cost monetary investment with a high return of sexual health and empowerment for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all.