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ECOSOC High-Level Segment**Statement submitted by the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 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.

The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights welcomes the opportunity to deliver a statement to the 2022 ECOSOC High-Level Segment and would like to highlight the impact of increasing privatization of public social services on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly in the right to education and the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Public services encompass a range of services that are vital and necessary for a dignified life. Equitable access to these services is crucial to reduce inequalities and to realise social justice. High-quality public services, such as education and health services, are the foundation of a fair and just society. They are also an effective way to pool resources to confront collective challenges, like gender imbalances and meet shared needs and ensure the full enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights for all.

However, over the past decades, the world has witnessed an increased effort by States and private actors to privatize essential public services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, States weakened regulations of private corporations under the pretext of speeding up the implementation and response to the pandemic recovery. This often has deeply concerning impacts on human rights, such as increasing inequalities and segregation, to the detriment of the poorest, low quality, and

loss of democratic control over areas essential for human dignity. Given the climate, health and economic crises, the weakening of public services will further exacerbate the challenges of people living in vulnerable situations, including women and girls. The absence of high-quality public services has proven the terrible consequences of lacking a system of collective protection to guarantee economic, social, and cultural rights in all times.

We therefore call on States to reverse the commercialization of public services and to allocate adequate financial and technical resources through domestic and international resource mobilization. By using progressive financing to provide equally to all what would otherwise be available only to those able to pay, public services have the power to correct a skewed income and wealth distribution and lay the foundation for a just society where wealth and power are fairly shared.

We would like to recommend to UN Member States to use the Global Manifesto for Public Services as a guiding tool to provide, reform, and create public services in line with international human rights law and standards, to ensure that they remain universal and accessible for all, participatory, transparent, trusted and democratically accountable, as well as adaptable, responsive, and transformative to those they serve.

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