

## **Human Rights Council 33<sup>rd</sup> session (13 – 30 September 2016)**

### **Item 3**

#### **Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development**

##### **Joint written statement**

##### **5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training**

This statement, jointly submitted by 23 organizations, reflects discussions facilitated by the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGO WG on HREL) of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO).

The NGO WG on HREL welcomes the high-level panel discussion to be held on 14 September to mark the fifth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UN Declaration on HRET), on the theme “The implementation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training: good practices and challenges”, following resolution HRC/31/L.12.

Created in 2006 for ensuring NGO participation in the process of global policy making on human rights education, the NGO Working Group, with appreciation to the States Platform on Human Rights Education, has been continuously advocating to give this issue its full place in the work of the Council and participated actively in the negotiation process of the UN Declaration on HRET. We wish the discussions during the high-level panel to be fruitful and look forward to the largest participation of States.

The right to an education that promotes human rights, fundamental freedoms and respect for the content of specific treaties can be found in numerous international instruments and the concept and importance of Human Rights Education are firmly established. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its link with Article 13,1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) clearly state that there is a right to human rights education. The web resource entitled “The right to human rights education”<sup>1</sup> launched by OHCHR in September 2014 represents a useful tool in this regard.

The link between the right to education and human rights education has been reaffirmed by last resolution on the right to education, HRC/32/L.33, which in its preambular paragraph 3 recalls *the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and the World Programme for Human Rights Education*, and in its Op 12 *Encourages States to promote human rights education in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and the World Programme for Human Rights Education as a means of contributing to the prevention of human rights violations and conflict*;

Indeed, it is our position, and one that is recognized by the wider international community, that human rights education plays a key role in building inclusive societies and a sustainable

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/Listofcontents.aspx>

future, strengthening social cohesion, especially in situations where the physical and psychological uprooting, casualization of families and disorientation occur in an extensive and stronger way such as today. Investing in human rights education serves as a sustainable strategy for a people-centred human, social and economic development.

The UN Declaration on HRET, at the initiative of Switzerland and Morocco, was adopted by the General Assembly in December 2011, *motivated by the desire to send a strong signal to the international community to strengthen all efforts in human rights education and training through a collective commitment by all stakeholders.*

If the UN General Assembly had already recognized the significance of HRE as a growing discipline when it proclaimed the period 1995-2004 the Decade for Human Rights Education, followed by Resolution 59/113 which established in 2005 the “World Program for Human Rights Education” in its consecutive, on-going phases, the UN Declaration on HRET was very welcome although the challenges of its implementation and monitoring still remain.

Before then, UNESCO made a remarkable work, especially by clarifying extensively the concept of human rights education. The *UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* adopted in 1974 is a useful tool and we encourage States to submit to the UNESCO mechanism by sending quality reports.

We also wish to mention the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, adopted in 2010 by the Organisation’s 47 member States in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7. The publication of Guidelines aimed at supporting States efforts in this domain is also remarkable. We would recommend the last updated one, containing the *Committee of Ministers’ guidelines to member States on the protection and promotion of human rights in culturally diverse societies* (13 June 2016).

Since then, many other initiatives were born. The adoption a year ago of the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup> (SDGs) by the General Assembly and of the Education 2030, Framework for Action<sup>3</sup> by UNESCO opens up new opportunities for the implementation of Human Rights Education at all levels as it has brought Human Rights Education to the highest level of policy making.

Goal 4 in its target 7 is particularly relevant to Human Rights Education as it states: *By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.*

Likewise, the Incheon Declaration para.9 stresses the importance of Human Rights Education and Training in order to achieve the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, notably through the implementation of the dedicated UNESCO Programmes “Education for Sustainable development” (ESD)<sup>4</sup> and “Global Citizenship Education” (GCED)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>Doc. A/RES/70/1

<sup>3</sup> Doc. ED-2015/Education 2030/1

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.desd.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://en.unesco.org/gced>

## Recommendations

1. Focus on implementation of human rights education within other global education initiatives such as Education First or GCED.

All these programs and initiatives are excellent tools but they also bring challenges, including clarification of each vis-à-vis the other and the necessary coordination between them. It is essential to clarify the linkages between human rights education and these initiatives so as to both avoid misunderstandings and allow better implementation without loss of energy, time and resources. Human rights education is part of international law, the UN Declaration on HRET has already defined it clearly. It is different though from civic education, from moral education or from citizenship education, among others.

2. Create an international entity or reinforce an existing structure, dedicated to stronger synergy among initiatives of UN agencies, intergovernmental entities and governments.

Article 12.1 and article 12.2 of the UN Declaration on HRET stress the importance of international cooperation and complementary and coordinated efforts at all levels in order to contribute to more effective implementation of human rights education. The proliferation of initiatives and programs require coordination, especially at international level.

3. Include human rights education in all States reports to United Nations human rights treaty bodies and the United Nations agencies.

As stated in article 13.1 of the UN Declaration on HRET, international and regional human rights mechanisms should, within their respective mandates, take into account human rights education and training in their work. Review and monitoring at the national level will in many cases be the most important way to ensure that a State is meeting its obligations. We hope that the high-level panel discussion will be an opportunity to remind heads of State and governments of their commitments to engage in systematic implementation and review of human rights education.

4. Budget and allocate resources

The UN Declaration in its article 14 stresses the importance for States to make the necessary resources available as part of the appropriate measures to ensure the effective implementation of and follow-up to the Declaration.

It is time to budget specific resources for implementing human rights education and we would like to see a transparent process in which a percentage of the GDP is specifically devoted to Human Rights Education and Training, including financing civil society research work on good practices, initiatives and programs.

5. Recognize and support the role of civil society

The UN Declaration on HRET in its Article 8.2 states that the conception, implementation and evaluation of and follow-up to such strategies, action plans, policies and programs should involve all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society and national human rights institutions, by promoting, where appropriate, multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Indeed, NGOs, in close collaboration with other actors, can support governments not only in promoting and providing human rights education as stated in resolution HRC/31/L.12 but also at all other stages, including the elaboration and monitoring of the national strategy. Our NGO Working Group remains committed to working in this direction and also to facilitate information sharing at all levels by identifying, collecting and disseminating information on good practices.