

Hundred and fifty-sixth Session

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Item 10.1 of the provisional agenda

**REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD'S TEMPORARY GROUP
ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

SUMMARY

In accordance with 154 EX/Decision 8.5(III), paragraph 15, the Working Group submits for consideration and decision by the Executive Board the report on the results of the meetings held in Paris on 30 October 1998 and 8 and 9 April 1999.

First meeting

1. The first meeting was opened by Mr P. Pataki, Chairperson of the Executive Board, who informed the meeting about the 12 countries nominated by the Executive Board at its first plenary meeting on 19 October 1998, in accordance with 154 EX/Decision 8.5(III).
2. The Group (list attached) elected Mr B. Tio-Touré (Côte d'Ivoire) Chairperson and Ms M. Mickwits (Finland) Vice-Chairperson. They also elected two Rapporteurs, namely Mr K. Hüfner (Germany) and Ms L. Buzas (Hungary). Mr M.W. Conley, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Education for Peace, Human Rights, Democracy, International Understanding and Tolerance, also participated in the meeting.
3. The adopted agenda consisted of two items: (i) time schedule for the work of the Working Group; and (ii) debate on proposals concerning the tasks of the Working Group as given in Part III of 154 EX/Decision 8.5.
4. With regard to the time schedule, it was decided that the Group would have a one-day meeting on 30 October 1998 to clarify its tasks and a two-day meeting on 8 and 9 April 1999 to prepare its final proposals for the 156th session of the Executive Board. It was agreed that the meeting in April will be in English and French.
5. The debate on the Working Group's tasks dealt with the following three sub-items:
 - (a) preparation of a strategy for human rights education (155 EX/Decision 8.5(III), para. 11);
 - (b) study of the mandate and working methods of the Advisory Committee on Education for Peace, Human Rights, Democracy, International Understanding and Tolerance (para. 12);
 - (c) structural problems within UNESCO (para. 13).
6. In order to achieve optimal results the Working Group agreed upon the following working methods:

there should be an open and transparent discussion about the problems both within the Secretariat and at the national level as well as between them;

the structural/intersectoral problems concerning human rights education should also take into account UNESCO's responsibilities in the fields of human rights research as well as human rights codification and monitoring;

the overall goal should be a more substantive debate and to contribute to an international/intergovernmental brainstorming in this field.
7. As to sub-item (a) following the explanatory note by Finland, it was agreed that the coordination, development and strengthening of human right education is a major challenge which the Executive Board itself should take up in order to promote human rights education in the planning of the next biennial programme and the next Medium-Term Strategy; it was also agreed that the Working Group was not to prepare a new strategy but to look at the convergence, overlapping and the need for coordination of various activities in the implementation of already existing plans and strategies concerning human rights education

while pin-pointing and identifying the specific role and potential of UNESCO leading to efficient lines of action.

8. Several speakers stressed the necessity of developing the concept of an integrated educational approach towards a culture of peace which will be necessarily a multifaceted one but must go beyond the mere addition of already existing activities in the different sectors which are partly historically grown during the period of East/West confrontation. The conceptional work towards an integrated whole should have priority before strategies of implementation are developed. Education should be at the heart of any strategy for peace-building. This is why UNESCO should continue its efforts for the development of a comprehensive system of education and training for peace, human rights, democracy, international understanding, tolerance and non-violence for all people and all educational levels.

9. Human rights education in its different dimensions, namely to teach and learn about, for and in human rights, was seen as of strategic importance in this multifaceted approach. Therefore, the members of the Group suggested further enhancing UNESCO's contribution to the promotion of human rights education and further strengthening cooperation in this field within the United Nations system as well as the better coordination of human rights education activities within UNESCO.

10. It was proposed that UNESCO should, in the future, provide more practical and concrete information concerning human rights education, such as information about the best practice in this field.

11. Concerning the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) the following questions were raised:

What is UNESCO's role? Is it a consultative role as mentioned in paragraph 15 of the Plan? Or should UNESCO play a central role in the design, implementation and evaluation of proposals under the Plan of Action as mentioned in paragraph 17?

When will the report of the High Commissioner be available, which, in cooperation with UNESCO will contain the results of preliminary survey and evaluation of existing human rights education programmes and initiatives at the international, regional and national levels (cf. para. 31 of the Plan)? When will there be an international planning conference on the Decade (cf. para. 38) following the publication of the report with the preparation of UNESCO and other United Nations agencies?

12. Representatives of Sectors involved, Ms K. Savolainen and Mr J. Symonides, provided information on UNESCO's action in the field of human rights education and on cooperation between UNESCO and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Concerning progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, they underlined that such a report is prepared every year by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and therefore only information on UNESCO's contribution to the implementation of this Plan could be made available (to be prepared by SHS/PHD jointly with ED/ECP).

13. Regarding sub-item (b), Mr Conley provided information concerning the mandate and working methods of the Advisory Committee. He underlined the necessity of meeting twice a year instead of only once. In addition, Mr Hufner who served in the Advisory Committee for

four years to the minutes of the four meetings stated that the minutes clearly indicated several still existing deficiencies:

There is still no feedback pattern established which ensures regular interaction and communication between the Advisory Committee and the responsible units within of the Secretariat (cf. the minutes of the first and second meeting).

Too much time is devoted to individual oral presentations by members of the Secretariat. The wish of the Advisory Committee has never been implemented that short written analytical notes should be sent to the Committee's members or included in the Annotated Agenda which also refer to problems of conceptualization and implementation as well as follow-ups of the Committee's recommendations (cf. second meeting).

So far, the Committee's members had no chance to collaborate with each other during the intervals of its meetings (cf. third meeting).

14. During the debate, the issue of other advisory bodies on questions overlapping with the mandate of the Advisory Committee was raised. Also, a proposal was made to undertake an in-depth analysis of the work of the Advisory Committee of the first four years.

15. Considering sub-item (c), the Working Group members requested additional information on the activities of various UNESCO units involved in human rights education. It was also stressed that, bearing in mind the overall coordination role of the Unit with regard to activities within the Transdisciplinary project, "Towards a culture of peace", this Unit should also participate in the forthcoming debate on structural questions (information on coordination mechanisms between Culture of Peace Programme (CPP) and various UNESCO Sectors and Units responsible for human rights education should be prepared by CPP).

16. In addition, the question was raised how the proposed new programme of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) "The Adaptation of Content to the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century" will be integrated in the overall structure of UNESCO which includes as one of its two major components, Component A, "Learning to live together in a democratic society: challenges for the adaptation of educational content", which will lay emphasis on the teaching of civics and human rights when planning curricula, training teachers and writing textbooks.

17. The members of the Working Group regretted that they received the working documents on the spot which did not allow to study them. Finland drew the attention to the recommendations of the Nordic meeting on human rights education (Nagu, Finland 18-19 August 1998) and hoped for comments from the Group members as a basis for the further reflection at the second meeting of the Group.

Second meeting

18. In accordance with the Working Group's request, the Secretariat provided additional documents for the second meeting regarding the following items:

the results of four regional conferences on human rights education: Europe - Turku, Finland, 18-21 September 1997; Africa - Dakar, Senegal, 14-18 December 1998; Asia and the Pacific - Pune, India, 3-6 February 1999; the Arab Region - Rabat, Morocco, 17-20 February 1999;

UNESCO's contribution to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004);

UNESCO's contribution to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights;

UNESCO Chairs in the struggle for human rights, democracy, peace and tolerance;

recent organizational and structural changes in the UNESCO Secretariat concerning the Transdisciplinary project, "Towards a culture of peace" and their impact on human rights education;

role of and cooperation between the Advisory Committees related to human rights education.

19. The second meeting was opened by Mr Tio Touré, President of the Working Group (Côte d'Ivoire), who proposed the adoption of the agenda: the order of items 3 and 4 was to be changed.

20. The draft report of the first meeting (Paris, 30 October 1998) was then adopted as prepared by Mr K. Hüfner, Rapporteur and Ms M. Mickwitz, Vice-President of the Working Group.

Concerning the preparation of the report of the present session, it was agreed that the draft report would be prepared by the Rapporteurs and the Vice-President before the end of April and then communicated to members of the Group for finalization before submission to the PX Commission for consideration (Paris, 31 May-4 June 1999).

21. The Director-General's representative, Ms F. Rivière, ADG/BPE, presented item 3 which refers to the recent structural changes in the UNESCO Secretariat. She introduced DG/Note/99/1 of 21 January 1999 which deals with the establishment of two departments: the Department of Education for a Culture of Peace (Education Sector) and the Department of Peace, Human Rights, Democracy and Tolerance (Sector of Social and Human Sciences). She also referred to DG/Note/99/9 of 18 March 1999 which concerns the structure of the Culture Sector and includes the establishment of the third department, the Department of Intercultural Dialogue and Pluralism for a Culture of Peace (Sector for Culture). DG/Note/99/10 of 18 March 1999 is devoted to the coordination of the Transdisciplinary project, "Towards a culture of peace" (CPP). These notes clarified, in particular, responsibility regarding human rights education and the coordination of all UNESCO programme actions related to a culture of peace. She also referred to the new role of IBE as an international clearing house for educational contents.

Information was also given on the organization by the Sector of Social and Human Sciences and the Education Sector of the regional conferences on human rights education and the eventual synthesis of the results after the Latin American and Caribbean Conference.

Ms Rivière also provided general information regarding various advisory bodies and the draft 30 C/5 concerning the Transdisciplinary project, "Towards a culture of peace". She drew the attention of the Working Group to a new 30 C/5 additional initiative in the case of zero real growth to establish a UNESCO Summer School on a Culture of Peace for young teachers.

22. Additional explanations and information regarding these issues were given by Ms K. Savolainen, Director, ED/ECP and Mr J. Symonides, Director, SHS/PHD.

23. The following issues were raised by the members of the Group:

Importance of the follow-up to and evaluation of the results of the regional conferences on human rights education.

UNESCO's external relations with the United Nations system and in particular coordination of UNESCO actions in the field of human rights with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Conceptual elaboration of a culture of peace with clarification of the role of human rights and human rights education within the comprehensive concept of a culture of peace.

Role of the advisory bodies and in particular the Advisory Committee on Education for Peace, Human Rights, Democracy, International Understanding and Tolerance, coordination and exchange of information with other advisory bodies and panels related to the culture of peace. It was mentioned that the Advisory Committee should provide new ideas, initiatives and critical views in order to improve the programmes and facilitate contacts with concerned experts and organizations.

Identification of the best cases of human rights education, in particular through reviews of the situation at country level.

Comparative analysis of textbooks from the viewpoint of human rights.

Broadening of the information base and transparency on human rights, especially on procedures (national and international) and strengthening of control mechanisms as specific tools for human rights education.

Review of the UNESCO information base on human rights with a view to widening the use of mass media and new technologies (the Internet, etc.).

Increasing importance of the role of NGOs in promoting human rights education.

Strengthening a research base of human rights education and the relationship between research, teaching/learning and action/everyday behaviour of teachers and students.

Empowering people who are working in the field for the protection of human rights and for human rights education.

Particular importance of civic rights and civics education for countries in transition to democracy.

Special measures to ensure dissemination of information and teaching materials on human rights for all social actors in all communities in the relevant adapted forms and in local languages; particular support for translation of international instruments on human rights into national and local languages of minorities and indigenous people; special teaching methods for human rights education should be developed for regions where illiteracy prevails.

Encouraging and assisting Member States to elaborate national plans and to establish focal points for human rights education as foreseen in the United Nations Plan of Action for the Decade of Human Rights Education.

Strengthening national, subregional, regional and international networks on human rights education including Associated Schools, UNESCO Chairs and human rights institutions.

Placing specific emphasis on the preparation of UNESCO concrete, practical teaching materials and examples of human rights education at various levels and forms of education. In particular, examples on the implementation of cultural pluralism at local and national levels would be interesting.

24. On the basis of the discussions on the above issues, the Working Group proposed a number of concrete recommendations in the light of its mandate as defined by 154 EX/Decision 8.5(III).

Recommendations

25. As a result of the two meetings of the Temporary Working Group on Human Rights Education held in Paris on 30 October 1998 and 8 and 9 April 1999, the following recommendations are being addressed to the Executive Board for further consideration:

- (a) In order to formulate a future strategy for human rights education, an evaluation of UNESCO's publications on human rights education and information during the present Medium-Term Strategy is necessary; this stocktaking activity is of utmost importance in the light of the new information and communication technologies available and of making optimal use of the already existing networks of Associated Schools, UNESCO Chairs and others. Increased use should be made of the Internet. UNESCO's home-pages should be improved by, e.g., extending links to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as to the National Commissions for UNESCO, IGOs, NGOs, academic and other institutions.
- (b) The contacts and cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should take place on a large basis in the Secretariat of UNESCO.
- (c) UNESCO's efforts as regards the collection and diffusion of material on human rights education should be continued and strengthened; those activities should be conducted in close collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO and other interested United Nations institutions as well as with NGOs in the field of human rights. The main goal should be the highest possible degree of transparency on procedures against human rights violations taking into account the existing mechanisms on the observance of human rights both at the global and regional level, including the activities of the United Nations treaty bodies and the UNESCO and ILO procedures.
- (d) Those information activities should be seen in close relationship with all human rights education which depends on further human rights research and results in action against human rights violations wherever they occur. Special emphasis

should be laid on ethical commitments of people related to human rights education.

- (e) The decisions taken by the Director-General between the first and the second meeting of the Temporary Working Group in order to improve the coordination of existing activities in the field of human rights education and information within the framework of a Transdisciplinary project, "Towards a culture of peace" were appreciated as important steps; further conceptual work will be necessary in order to clarify the intrinsic value and strategic importance of human rights education within the project. The new coordination mechanism should be accompanied by a strengthened intellectual leadership. The coordination should take place at a sufficiently high level.
- (f) The Temporary Working Group took note of the ongoing deliberations on the methods of work of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (CRE) as well as on the future activities of the International Bureau of Education (IBE). The impact of these results should be taken into due account in a future strategy on human rights education.
- (g) Regional conferences are important for the development of human rights education and for promoting links and contacts between specialists in this field. The preparation of such conferences should be based in both of the Secretariat sectors concerned. Comparative analyses should be made of the results of the conferences.
- (h) In order to improve the substance and methods of human rights education in terms of identifying concrete examples and materials, UNESCO should become involved in:
 - comparative textbook analyses on the content of human rights;
 - the identification of best practices in human rights education;
 - country review procedures on human rights education; and
 - the development and use of simulation exercises as effective pedagogical tools, e.g., on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights or on other United Nations treaty bodies.

The setting up of a monitoring and evaluation procedure in the field of human rights education will be necessary.

- (i) Issues related to cultural diversity shall be considered in the discussions aiming at improving human rights education. UNESCO should further encourage and assist Member States to launch national plans and establish focal points for human rights education as laid down in the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004).
- (j) Human rights education requires continued attention and should not be restricted to the celebration of specific days, years or decades.

- (k) Concerning the mandate and working methods of the Advisory Committee on Education for Peace, Human Rights, Democracy, International Understanding and Tolerance, the Working Group stressed the importance of its contribution and its existence. It was suggested that:
- members of the Advisory Committee be specialists in the field of education as laid down in Article 50.2 of the Regulations for the general classification of the various categories of meetings convened by UNESCO, and in Article 3.1 of the Statutes of the Advisory Committee itself;
 - the Advisory Committee meet at least once a year;
 - a permanent feedback pattern be established to ensure regular interaction and communication between the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat;
 - better use be made of the expertise of the members of the Advisory Committee, also during the intervals of its meetings;
 - short, analytical notes be sent in due time to the members of the Committee to be dealt with at its meetings;
 - an information network be established between the Secretariat and the members of the Committee as well as between them;
 - a regular exchange of documentation be guaranteed between the Advisory Committee and other Committees with mandates in related fields of activity;
 - each Committee be represented in meetings of other Committees in order to guarantee concerted action and a better flow of information;
 - the dates of the following meeting of the Advisory Committee be fixed during the meeting in session;
 - the Advisory Committee's minutes also be distributed to the Ministries of Education and the National Commissions for UNESCO in order to increase impact and transparency;
 - the Temporary Working Group further recommended that the mandate and working methods of the Advisory Committee be evaluated again after two Committee meetings.

ANNEX

**Composition of the Temporary Working Group
(Human Rights Education)**

Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	Group V(a)	Group V(b)
Germany	Hungary	Brazil	Japan	Côte d'Ivoire	Egypt
Finland	Lithuania	Haiti	Republic of Korea	Uganda	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya