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RESULTS OF THE FOURTH CONSULTATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1974 RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING, COOPERATION AND PEACE AND EDUCATION RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SUMMARY

In accordance with 34 C/Resolution 87, the Director-General presents to the Executive Board a report on the results of the fourth consultation on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights on Fundamental Freedoms. This consultation was conducted in accordance with the new procedures for monitoring established by the Executive Board (177 EX/Decision 35 and 180 EX/Decision 31). It involved a questionnaire sent to all Member States of UNESCO.

This report is based on the analysis of replies to this questionnaire as well as on in-house resources. The information supplied by Member States also refers to the implementation of the first phase of the Plan of Action of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-2009). There are no additional policy implications of a financial or administrative nature.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 28.

I. Introduction

1. Adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in 1974, the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms provides a normative framework for promoting human rights education, by detailing guiding principles and formulating a global approach.

2. The values promoted by the 1974 Recommendation are reflected in the main elements of the World Programme on Human Rights Education (WPHRE) adopted on 10 December 2004 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Built on the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), the WPHRE is structured around a series of phases, the first of which covers the period 2005-2009 and focuses on the primary and secondary school systems at the national level. Several consultations on its implementation have been organized through the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee for Human Rights Education in the School System (UNIACC), with more than 70 countries having been involved in this process.¹

3. UNESCO has been collaborating with other United Nations agencies, in particular with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) through the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System (UNIACC) and other major institutions in this field.² A series of events have been organized in cooperation with Member States on the occasion of the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including an exhibition of learning materials and a round table to discuss national experiences of putting human rights into practice in and through education (December 2008). Given the importance of this subject, the Human Rights Council adopted in September 2007 Resolution 6/10, which calls for the development of a United Nations declaration on human rights education and training. UNESCO has been contributing to the consultation and drafting process of this declaration.

4. In line with Article VIII of UNESCO's Constitution and 26 C/Resolution 1.18 concerning the statutory obligation of Member States to report on action taken on conventions and recommendations, UNESCO has conducted periodic consultations on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation. The fourth consultation was conducted pursuant to 34 C/Resolution 87, 179 EX/Decision 35 and 180 EX/Decision 31. For this purpose, the Assistant Director-General for Education addressed in November 2008 a letter to all National Commissions requesting from Member States periodic reports on the measures taken at national level for the implementation of the Recommendation. Along with this letter, a questionnaire drawn up by the Secretariat was addressed for the preparation of the reports.

5. As of 6 July 2009, the UNESCO Secretariat had received 35 reports from Member States (list available for consultation with the Secretariat). Although the response rate is on par with the overall response rate for United Nations, action should be taken, both by the UNESCO Secretariat and the Member States, to improve it.³ The national reports vary in regard to the volume of information provided and the way in which it is presented. Some reports follow the broad layout of the questionnaire. Others present the information by theme, while some have their own distinctive presentations. This report synthesizes the data and information provided by Member States in response to the questionnaire as well as in-house resources.

¹ A summary of national initiatives undertaken within the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing) is available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/Summary-national-initiatives2005-2009.htm>.

² UNESCO's website on Human Rights Education <http://www.unesco.org/en/human-rights-education>.

³ Although reporting has improved since previous consultations, many countries do not have the capacity to prepare good quality reports. UNESCO will therefore continue to develop Member States' capacity in this regard.

II. Application of the Recommendation and national legal framework

6. Member States were requested to outline in their reports the general legal framework established for the implementation of the Recommendation. The replies provided highlight the increasing importance of peace and education as key elements of human rights, democracy, international understanding, tolerance and freedom. Legislative and administrative measures have been taken at different levels in order to facilitate the implementation of the provisions contained in the Recommendation. In addition, detailed information on the actual economic, political and social realities of the country is also provided in several reports, notably Burkina Faso, Colombia, Jordan, Lithuania, Mali, Peru, Serbia and Sri Lanka. Colombia, for instance, raises the issue of violence in certain areas that could negatively impact ongoing processes, such as human rights education.

7. General indications on the ways in which national education policies and programmes correspond to the provisions of the Recommendation have been provided notably by Austria, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Mali, Poland, Serbia and Uzbekistan. For example, Austria reports that, since 2005, the implementation of the Recommendation has been supported through various measures as part of the first phase (2005-2009) of the WPHRE and the Democracy Initiative 2007-2008 launched by the Austrian Government.

Constitutional and legislative frameworks

8. Constitutional and legislative frameworks are clearly mentioned by almost all reporting Member States. As an example, on the question of constitutional provisions, Colombia reports that Article 67 of its Constitution stipulates that “education will form Colombians to respect human rights, peace and democracy”.⁴ Article 14 of the Constitution states that human rights education is compulsory in civil or military educational processes.

9. The information supplied by many Member States describes the legal norms and factual situation, and demonstrates how laws and practices comply with the Recommendation. A legislative framework pertaining to human rights education has been adopted in many countries, such as Armenia, Austria, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Estonia, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Mali, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan.

10. The report submitted by the Republic of Korea mentions that a draft Bill on Human Rights Education was tabled in the National Assembly in 2007. In Panama, Law No. 2 of 30 January 1984 incorporates the study and systematic teaching of human rights in the education system. In Peru, Law No. 27741 of 2002 establishes education policy on human rights, creating a national plan that renders obligatory dissemination of the Constitution, human rights and international humanitarian law at all levels.

The administrative framework and other measures adopted

11. As requested by the questionnaire, reports from some Member States (notably Austria, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Finland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mali, Norway, Panama and Uzbekistan) describe the current situation relating to the existing administrative framework. In Finland, for instance, there is regulation aimed at promoting human rights education. A government decree concerning the objectives of education contains provisions on the development of pupils as members of humanity and society, with reference to the teaching of respect for human rights.

12. Several Member States provide detailed information demonstrating the extent to which national education policy corresponds to the provisions of the Recommendation (notably Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, Gambia, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Mali, Malta, Norway, Panama, Peru and Turkey). Some countries mention the adoption of policy for the implementation of human rights education (Colombia) or refer to a National Action Plan for human rights that emphasizes human

⁴ “La educación formará al colombiano en el respeto a los derechos humanos, a la paz y a la democracia”.

rights education as a policy priority (the Republic of Korea). In Peru, a national Network of Human Rights and Peace Education was established in 2008. In Austria, comprehensive measures designed to provide young people with information and to encourage them to vote were introduced in 2007 when the voting age was lowered to 16.

III. Implementation of the Recommendation: overview on the current situation of human rights education

13. Each country has its own challenges and priorities linked to its historical, socio-political and cultural contexts. Human rights education must be contextualized to develop pedagogy, materials and learning outcomes in line with each country's needs and situation. The challenges reported by countries are diverse: early stage democratization; conflict situations; intensified violence; poverty; multicultural societies, etc. Some countries, such as Gambia, Qatar and South Africa, pointed out the links between these challenges and progress towards the Education for All (EFA) objectives, in particular goal 6 on the quality of education. Indeed, UNESCO recognizes that education that mainstreams learning for peace, human rights and democracy plays a crucial role in stimulating social justice and cohesion as well as in creating a culture of equity, inclusion and rights within the education system itself.

14. Educational planning to incorporate elements of peace, human rights and democracy is considered an expression of the political will for promoting these values and principles. To undertake this task, some countries have set up a national unit at the Ministry of Education. Several states have made efforts to establish strategic partnerships among concerned ministries and stakeholders, namely with national human rights institutions, teachers' unions, universities, research institutions, national associations of history teachers, religious leaders, the private sector, ombudspersons and municipalities. The Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU)⁵ cooperates with Member States in the region. A number of countries consider international cooperation as a means to reinforce their efforts in the promotion of education for peace, human rights and democracy. Examples of bilateral and multilateral cooperation include teacher visiting programmes (Finland) and work on the competences of teachers and improvement of curricula (Serbia).

15. **National Action Plans.** Many countries have developed action plans related to the basic values contained in the 1974 Recommendation and within the framework of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (see aforementioned website) or independently. In Uzbekistan, the implementation of the Recommendation created a need for a shift from a needs-based approach to a rights-based approach to education. This led to the revision of curricula, textbooks and pedagogy to incorporate learner-centred instruction.

16. **Main themes.** Countries mentioned a wide range of key themes addressed in their respective educational plans, related to: (i) existing human rights frameworks, mechanisms and institutions; (ii) the learner's everyday life, including religious issues, racism, discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, Holocaust remembrance, apartheid, slavery, intolerance towards Muslims, violence in schools, HIV and AIDS, and sustainable development; and iii) moral and ethical values relating to, for example, fairness, justice, responsibility, democracy, dialogue, solidarity, tolerance, non-violence, respect, membership, equity, peace, human dignity, etc. Particular attention was paid to gender parity and equality throughout the education system. Intercultural education has become an important part of education objectives in some countries. Several countries, such as Canada, Finland, Germany, Kazakhstan, Norway, Panama, Peru, Serbia, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan, highlighted the special attention they pay to language issues, including the promotion of multilingual teaching.

⁵ APCEIU is UNESCO's Category II organization established in 2000 by an Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Korea and UNESCO in accordance with the Resolution of the UNESCO General Conference at its 30th session (30 C/Resolution 17).

17. **Approach and methods.** In general, human rights education is integrated as a single subject and/or as a cross-curricular subject. For example, related components are integrated in civic education, life skills education, religious education and studies, moral and ethics education, language classes, sociology, history and social and human studies as well as in mathematics and life sciences. Diverse teaching methods are used in schools, including group work, collective research and brainstorming, debate and discussion, role play and simulations, etc. A number of countries mentioned their work with the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). Associated Schools are often considered a laboratory for ideas and action and are an excellent platform for sharing. Most of the countries have included education for peace, human rights and democracy in programmes for primary and secondary levels. The role of higher education, including the UNESCO Chairs, is considered essential in research, capacity-building and informing educational policy and content. In many countries, components related to human rights education are integrated in educational programmes for professional and vocational schools as well as at the early childhood level.

18. **Target.** Several countries have established special measures to assist the most vulnerable groups, including immigrants, indigenous populations, Roma children, children living with disabilities and those living in rural or remote areas. Almost all countries emphasized the importance of out-of-school or non-formal education targeting justice and security personnel, media, women and out-of-school girls.

19. **Teacher training.** In several countries, pre-service teacher training for human rights education is compulsory. A systematic and adequate introduction to the content and methods of human rights education is required in teacher training, especially with a view to developing ethical thinking. A UNESCO project in Albania (2001-2008) trained 3,000 teachers in human rights education through a “cascade system”.

IV. Lessons learnt and the way forward

(i) Obstacles and continuing challenges

20. Education for peace, human rights and democracy should ideally be integrated in all spheres and at all stages of education. However, experiences point to difficulties in achieving this due to limited financial and human resources as well as capacity and the lack of clearly defined tasks among the different levels of policy-making. Some countries also mentioned the importance of developing leadership to strongly promote education. Finally, a comment was made concerning poor coordination at the international level, with overlapping frameworks. UNESCO is conscious of the need for action to respond to these challenges and is actively working with the UNIACC to better coordinate United Nations actions in this area, at both the global and national levels. In this regard, the Organization has increased cooperation with other actors such as the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and major non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and associations. Significant efforts are also being made to enhance the visibility of these coordination mechanisms through a series of joint activities.

21. Several countries raised obstacles concerning insufficient pre-service and in-service training as well as the lack of clear guidelines and relevant materials for teachers and school personnel, including managers and administrators at the local level. Teachers are also often overwhelmed by the diverse demands put on them. In regards to the curriculum, it was pointed out that it is often overloaded and not always updated. A lack of culturally relevant educational materials was also mentioned. Teachers appreciate practical materials ready for use in their classrooms.

22. At the conceptual level, some countries underlined religious and cultural resistance to integrating human rights-related values and principles in education. Teachers are often confused regarding related disciplines (education for citizenship, peace, etc.). Lack of effective partnerships with the media limits the social change that education in and for human rights seeks to encourage.

(ii) Suggestions for future action by Member States and UNESCO

23. Effective implementation of education in this area requires a holistic approach that takes into consideration the curriculum, teaching materials, teacher training, teaching methods and the school environment. Education for peace, human rights and democracy must be integrated into national education strategies as a whole, particularly policies and strategies for EFA. To achieve this, it is useful to establish a national coordinating unit among concerned ministries and stakeholders. One report also stated the need to integrate human rights education as a separate, examinable subject. A more systematic approach to human rights education encompassing the diverse aspects of formal and non-formal education and training is necessary at the different levels.

24. The role of human rights education was underlined, in particular regarding post-conflict situations, remembrance and inter-religious dialogue. It is essential that adequate resources be allocated in order to secure a solid follow-up to these issues and others, facilitating the innovation and renewal of human rights education.

25. Parents and learners must be further engaged in promoting human rights in order to build and strengthen a human rights culture throughout the education system. A change in the mindsets of societies is necessary for the full respect of everyone's rights. Closer cooperation with media professionals is important in this regard.

26. The role of research and higher education was underlined with the following suggestions: further development of university degree programmes specialized in human rights education; development of methods to measure the impact of human rights education, serving to ensure sustainability through well-planned follow-up; and better coordination of the various stakeholders involved in human rights education research.

27. To build further on achievements to date, some National Commissions in some States proposed to create a practical online platform for sharing materials and good practices and to increase networking, in particular between human rights institutions, parents and teachers associations, NGOs, international organizations, the media, universities and teacher training colleges.

28. To ensure more effective implementation of the 1974 Recommendation, UNESCO is mobilizing the education policy, research and practice communities from different geographical regions around reflections on how to put human rights into practice. Thus, greater awareness of the Recommendation and human rights education has been achieved through the involvement of National Commissions in a series of activities on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is anticipated that UNESCO will continue to provide support to its Member States in this field, with focus on the production of practical tools for teachers and educators, capacity-building, networking and the development of research on the monitoring and evaluation of education policies.

Action expected of the Executive Board

28. In the light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 182 EX/35,
2. Recalling 34 C/Resolution 87, 177 EX/Decision 35, 180 EX/Decision 31 and 181 EX/Decision 27,
3. Takes note of the results of the Fourth Consultation on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation

and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in conjunction with the World Programme on Human Rights Education (WPHRE);

4. Requests the Director-General to ensure that the results of the Fourth Consultation, as UNESCO's contribution to the consultation on the first phase of the Plan of Action of the World Programme for Human Rights Education that ends in December 2009, are submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights for follow-up;
5. Invites the Director-General to contribute the results of the Fourth consultation to the ongoing consultation and drafting process for a United Nations Declaration for Human Rights Education and Training as adopted by the Human Rights Council in its Resolution 6/10;
6. Requests document 182 EX/35, together with its decision and comments if any, to be transmitted to the General Conference at its 35th session.