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Item **30** of the provisional agenda

LEARNING WITHOUT FEAR: PREVENTING AND COMBATING SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

SUMMARY

This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 196th session of the Executive Board at the request of France.

An explanatory note together with a proposed draft decision is attached.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. Irrespective of age, social situation, geography and culture, gender-based violence is a serious violation of human rights and is often tolerated and sustained in the very institutions that are supposed to fight against it.

2. School, which should be a safe space accessible to all boys and girls, can thus become, anywhere in the world, a place where children are exposed to various forms of gender-based violence. This is described as "school-related gender-based violence" (SRGBV). While such violence remains largely invisible and unpunished, the EFA *Global Monitoring Report*[1] estimates that some 246 million pupils may be subject to harassment or attack either on the way to school or within the school each year.

3. Both boys and girls can be targets. Girls are nonetheless the most exposed, particularly to sexual violence. Boys are most often subject to severe corporal punishment and gang violence. Factors increasing the risk of being victim to this violence, such as poverty or belonging to a marginalized group, have been identified. Being a victim of or threatened by SRGBV weakens self-esteem, affects school performance and can cause pupils to drop out of school. In addition to the resulting adverse psychological consequences, for girls there are often serious consequences in terms of sexual and reproductive health. Indeed, school-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls.

4. It should be recalled that the Dakar Framework for Action (education for all goal 5) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 3) aimed to achieve gender parity at all levels of education by 2015. Those goals are far from being met: in 2014, 32% of girls were not completing a full cycle of education and 39 million aged 11 to 15 were not attending school. Girls continue to face specific barriers and their presence in school declines as they move up the education ladder.

5. A detailed understanding of the violence – particularly the stereotypes and structural inequalities on which it is based – is essential to enabling educational institutions to prevent such acts, protect children and help change attitudes. However, to date, the data needed to develop efficient responses are partial and inadequate.

6. While this problem is not new, international awareness is growing: this violence affects an increasing number of children and is exacerbated in the context of conflict. The entire United Nations system is concerned, in the context of combating violence against women and girls and against children.

7. France is participating in the mobilization in accordance with its commitments to gender equality and education for all. France shares these commitments with UNESCO, which has made gender equality one of its two global priorities for the period 2014-2021, and is actively engaged in its promotion in education systems and teaching processes through the development of education policies, programmes, content and training.

8. In April 2014, France, UNESCO and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) convened more than 30 United Nations agencies, governments, development agencies, civil society organizations and research institutions[2] to a meeting in Paris, where it was decided to

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1 EFA GMR Policy paper 17, March 2015, based on a study conducted by PLAN International in 2013.

2 Ministries of foreign affairs and international development, UNESCO, United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNAIDS-IATT, Global Education First Initiative-UNESCO, Global Monitoring Report (GMR), International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Pôle de Dakar, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department for International Development (DFID), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Irish Aid, Deutsche Gesellschaft fûr Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Genre en Action, PLAN International, PLAN

establish an international working group dedicated to combating school-related gender-based violence.

9. On 8 October 2014, on the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child, H.E. Ms Annick Girardin, Minister of State for Development and the Francophonie of France, in the presence of Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, announced France's intention to propose a decision on school-related gender-based violence to the Executive Board of UNESCO. As the time has come to assess the progress of the MDGs and EFA goals, it is important that the matter be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda in order to ensure each and every one the right to quality education. In view of its normative competence, expertise in capacity-building, and responsibility for coordinating the consultations on the post-2015 education agenda, UNESCO has a natural vocation to stimulate, coordinate, advocate and support the implementation of responses to school-related gender-based violence.

10. The draft decision invites UNESCO and its Member States to reaffirm their mobilization against SRGBV and all forms of violence in schools; to design and implement national policies and action plans; to promote, drawing on target 4.a of the final report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the creation of safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all boys and girls.

11. The draft decision also invites the Director-General to submit to the next Executive Board indicative tentative roadmap to better combat school-related gender-based violence.

France, Save the Children, Concern Worldwide, Education International, ActionAid, University of Sussex, University of London.

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LEARNING WITHOUT FEAR: PREVENTING AND COMBATING SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

ADDENDUM

SUMMARY

This document is an addendum to document 196 EX/30. This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 196th session of the Executive Board at the request of France.

Action expected of the Executive Board: Proposed decision by Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, China, Czech Republic, El Salvador, France, Gabon, Germany, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Sweden, Togo, Tunisia and United States of America.

Proposed decision

The Executive Board,

1. Aware of the efforts made in the United Nations system to speak out and raise the awareness of the international community in order to combat violence, particularly against women, girls and children,

2. Mindful of:

   (a) the provisions of the relevant United Nations Human Rights instruments, in particular: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO) of 1960 (Article 1); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 (Article 10) and its General Comment No.19; the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (Articles 19 and 28) and its Optional Protocols; the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (Chapter IV, B); the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel of 1997 (V, VII, VIII, IX); the Dakar Framework for Action (2000); the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000); the Declaration on "A world fit for children" adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its 27th special session in 2002 (paras. 7.4 to 7.6) and its action plan; and the Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (2007), entitled "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women" (A/RES/61/143),

   (b) the report of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) submitted by the co-Chairs of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group for consideration and appropriate action, in particular its targets 4.5, 4.a, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.c,

3. Recalling:

   (a) that under its Constitution, it is the task of UNESCO to "*contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion*", and that, since the establishment of the Organization, education has been considered one of its main purposes,

   (b) that UNESCO reaffirms a humanistic and holistic vision of quality education worldwide, the progressive implementation of the rights of every individual to education and the conviction that education plays a fundamental role in human, social and economic development (37 C/56),

   (c) that UNESCO has made gender equality one of its two global priorities for the period 2014-2021 (37 C/4),

4. Welcoming action taken by UNESCO to promote girls' education and mobilize people against school-related gender-based violence, such as establishing the Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education, and co-chairing, alongside the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), the international working group dedicated to combating school-related gender-based violence, in close cooperation with UN-Women, as the United Nations lead agency for the coordination and promotion of work on gender equality and women's empowerment,

5. Emphasizing that in the context of the discussion on the international post-2015 development agenda facilitated by the United Nations, UNESCO, in accordance with its lead role in education, has played a lead role in facilitating consultations of Member States, civil society and other key stakeholders on the vision and position of education in the post-2015 agenda,

6. Recognizing that violence against children and school-related gender-based violence, in particular, have a devastating effect on the dignity of children and on the enjoyment of human rights, and constitute a major obstacle to the equal enjoyment of the right to education for all, gender equality at all levels of education and inclusive, transformational and sustainable development,

7. Also recognizing that school-related gender-based violence:

   (a) is an expression of stereotypes based on gender and gender inequalities in all of our societies – which perpetuate stereotypes and inequalities,

   (b) includes all types of violence or threat of violence directed specifically against pupils because of their gender and/or affecting girls and boys disproportionately, as the case may be,

   (c) may be of a physical, sexual or psychological nature and may take the form of intimidation, punishment, ostracism, corporal punishment, bullying, humiliation, degrading treatment, harassment and sexual abuse and exploitation,

   (d) may be inflicted by pupils, teachers or members of the educational community,

   (e) may occur: within the school grounds; in its outbuildings; on the way to school; or even beyond, during extracurricular activities or through the increasingly widespread use of ICTs (cyber-bullying, sexual harassment via mobile phones and so forth),

   (f) may have serious long-term consequences, such as: loss of self-confidence, self-deprecation, deterioration of physical and mental health, early and unintended pregnancies, depression, poor academic results, absenteeism, dropout, development of aggressive behaviour and so forth,

8. Concerned by the fact that in all countries of the world, primary and secondary school, which should be a safe space for fulfilment and personal development, can become a place where children are exposed to various forms of gender-based violence,

9. Concerned in particular by the fact that girls, owing to gender stereotypes and power inequalities in all our societies, are the main victims of such violence,

10. Noting that such violence, which is often tolerated and sustained by the very institutions that are supposed to fight against it remains largely unreported and unpunished because of victims' fear of being stigmatized, while it is rising alarmingly and particularly affects children in vulnerable circumstances, such as conflict, migration, refugee camps, extreme poverty and disability and children from ethnic minorities,

11. Considering that the low capacity of education stakeholders with regard to gender and girls' education, the lack of knowledge, indicators and data on this taboo subject, and the lack of coordination to underpin the implementation of strategies and activities, means that gender-based violence is not taken into account effectively in educational policies and systems,

12. Considering, on the other hand, that a better understanding of all dimensions of gender-based violence is essential to enabling educational institutions to prevent such acts, protect children – particularly girls – and help change attitudes to gender roles to promote gender equality,

13. Condemns gender-based violence as well as all forms of violence in and around schools, in all its forms and manifestations;

14. Encourages the governments of Member States to adopt policies and national action plans resulting from multisectoral, multilevel and multistakeholder consultations, including measures such as:

    (a) the development or strengthening of legal frameworks, internal regulations and official codes of conduct to put an end to impunity for perpetrators of violence;

    (b) the guarantee of safe and inclusive school settings conducive to gender equality through the revision of educational approaches including alternative disciplinary measures, content, education programmes and manuals as well as the establishment of gender-sensitive and appropriate learning environments;

    (c) the development of initial and continuing training curricula for the education community to raise awareness about school-related gender-based violence and gender equality in school;

    (d) the involvement of young people, community members and leaders through a participatory approach using education programmes, mentoring and outreach campaigns on non-violence, children's rights, gender equality and girls' empowerment;

    (e) the establishment of data collection, reporting, referencing and monitoring mechanisms on gender-based violence both inside and outside school, through intersectoral coordination in order to measure the results of the various violence prevention activities;

15. Calls on the organizations of the United Nations system, Member States, development partners and civil society organizations to:

    (a) strengthen partnerships, research and the sharing of best practices and experience and their contribution to the implementation of national action plans;

    (b) make combating school-related gender-based violence a cooperation and development policy priority;

16. Thanks the Director-General for the work already undertaken to enhance coordination of the partners in the fight to combat school-related gender-based violence;

17. Invites the Director-General to submit to the Executive Board at its 197th session, a provisional road map that identifies clearly UNESCO's role in achieving the following objectives:

    (a) Promote partnerships within the United Nations system, including through the global partners' working group on school-related gender-based violence;

    (b) Enhance awareness-raising by harnessing UNESCO's means of communication for media campaigns and mobilizing its networks: National Commissions for UNESCO, UNESCO Chairs, associated schools and category 1 and category 2 institutes and centres;

(c) Identify the relevant ongoing programmes, data-gathering mechanisms and UNESCO standard-setting instruments to be updated to incorporate, in a cross-cutting manner, the fight against school-related gender-based violence;

(d) Define the operational procedures for capacity-building and technical assistance for countries in the implementation and monitoring of national plans to prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence;

(e) Finalize the development of global guiding principles to prevent and combat gender-based violence in the education sector with a view to their adoption by the General Conference of UNESCO and/or the United Nations General Assembly, coordinated by UN-Women as the United Nations system's lead agency in this regard;

(f) Establish the underpinnings for a global school-related gender-based violence monitoring and reporting mechanism;

18. Invites the Director-General to make clear the preconditions, in particular financial (voluntary extrabudgetary contributions from Member States), for the implementation of each paragraph of the provisional road map requested in paragraph 15 above;

19. Further invites the Director-General to continue to advocate the right to education in a safe, violence-free environment that is accessible to all girls and boys in the post-2015 development agenda, to include the fight against school-related gender-based violence in the future framework for action on education, and to ensure that it is taken into account in the process of identifying the indicators.