

REPORT

A Series of NGO Panels on Human Rights Education

During the 10th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (2-27 March 2009)

Facilitated by

NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning

of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO), Geneva

Outcome document of the series of five NGO panels on human rights education held in parallel to the tenth session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva

PANELS

- I. The Role of Human Rights Defenders in Human Rights Education**
- II. Safe School Environment for the Girl Child through a Human Rights Education Perspective**
- III. Intercultural and Interfaith Education: An Imperative for Achieving Freedom of Religion and Mutual Understanding**
- IV. The UN Framework for Human Rights Education and Civil Society Participation: Draft UN Declaration on HR Education and Training and the World Programme for Human Rights Education**
- V. The Role of Human Rights Education in Combating Racism and Discrimination**

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For further information and details on the report of each panel contained in this document, please contact directly with the corresponding organisation as follows:

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| <b>Panel II</b><br>Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF)<br>International Federation of University Women (IFUW)                                             | <a href="mailto:wwsf@wwsf.ch">wwsf@wwsf.ch</a>                   |
| <b>Panel III</b><br>Arigatou Foundation<br>Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (OSMTH)                                                       | <a href="mailto:mluribe@arigatou.ch">mluribe@arigatou.ch</a>     |
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**NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning**  
of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO), Geneva

## INTRODUCTION

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*The NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGO WG on HREL)*<sup>1</sup> facilitated a series of five NGO panels on human rights education during the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC), 2-27 March, 2009.

*The NGO WG on HREL* is a network of NGOs based in Geneva and provides a platform for NGOs with the aim to ensure the NGO participation in global policy-making on human rights education (HRE) in relation to the UN institutions, principally the UN HRC. Currently more than 40 organisations in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council are in the network of *the NGO WG on HREL*.

Since the UN Decade for HRE (1995-2004), awareness of the importance of HRE has been raised. With the advocacy and help of NGOs and other civil society actors, the UN launched the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) on 1 January 2005. Promotion of “*human rights education and learning as well as advisory services, technical assistance and capacity building (...)*” is defined as one of the central concerns of the UN HRC.<sup>2</sup> The HRC also adopted by consensus Resolution A/HRC/RES/6/10 (28 September 2007) on the United Nations declaration on human rights education and training. This resolution requested the Advisory Committee of the HRC to prepare a draft UN declaration on human rights education and training, and also a progress report for submission to the HRC main Session in March 2009. The same year, 2009 will conclude the first phase of the WPHRE and the second phase is expected to follow.

HRE encompasses all human rights issues and contributes to the prevention of violent conflicts, the promotion of equality and sustainable development and the enhancement of people’s participation in decision-making. It contributes also to the promotion of gender equality, the rights of the child, religious tolerance, elimination of racial discrimination and xenophobia, minority rights, and rights of all other vulnerable groups of people.

*The NGO WG on HREL* launched a collective NGO initiative for HRE. A written joint NGO statement on “the UN Framework for Human Rights Education and Civil Society Participation” was drafted in cooperation with *Human Rights Education Associates (HREA. www.hrea.org)* and submitted to the HRC 10th session. The statement<sup>3</sup> was jointly submitted by 365 signatory organisations - 56 organisations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and 309 organisations without consultative status including 5 National Human Rights institutions, from 88 countries representing every continent.

The series of five NGO panels were organised as part of this NGO initiative. Each panel focused on a specific issue or area of human rights viewed in the perspective of human rights education, organised by 2-3 organisations respectively.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of these panels is to ensure that the views and suggestions of civil society are reflected in global-policy making, providing an open forum for participants in search of a better strategy to deal with various human rights issues.

The series of panels were attended by more than 130 representatives from non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations, and the UN Member States - mainly from NGOs. 31 of them attended more than two panels. The panellists included representatives mainly from NGOs and several from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as well as from the Member State.

This final report on the series provides views on human rights education through the scope of specific issues or areas of human rights, and is distributed to all attendants of the Panels as well as other interested actors for better strategy-building on HRE in dealing with various human rights issues.

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<sup>1</sup> *The NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education & Learning (NGO WG on HREL)* of the NGO Committee on Human Rights (Geneva) of CoNGO (the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relations with the UN).

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly Resolution 60/251 (3 April 2006), operative para.5 (a).

<sup>3</sup> The document number is 112 (A/HRC/10/NGO/112); [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/sdpage\\_e.aspx?b=10&se=83&t=7](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/sdpage_e.aspx?b=10&se=83&t=7) or directly at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G09/119/92/PDF/G0911992.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>4</sup> Simultaneous interpretation into French and Spanish for two Panels was contributed by Ursula Barter, representative of *the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)*.

**A Series of NGO Panels on Human Rights Education**  
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| <b>Panel I</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Panel II</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Panel III</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Panel IV</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Panel V</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <b><i>The Role of Human Rights Defenders in Human Rights Education</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b><i>Safe School Environment for the Girl Child through a Human Rights Education Perspective</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b><i>Intercultural and Interfaith Education: An Imperative for Achieving Freedom of Religion and Mutual Understanding</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b><i>The UN Framework for Human Rights Education and Civil Society Participation: Draft UN Declaration on HR Education and Training and the WPHRE</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b><i>The Role of Human Rights Education in Combating Racism and Discrimination</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Tuesday, 3 March<br/>13:00-15:00 XXIII</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Thursday, 12 March<br/>14:00-16:00 Room XXII</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Friday, 13 March<br/>14:00-16:00 Room XXII</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Monday, 16 March<br/>13:00-15:00 Room XXI</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Tuesday, 24 March<br/>14:00-16:00 Room XXIII</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p align="center"><i>Panellists</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Mr. Mugiyanto</b><br/>Chairperson, Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances</p> <p align="center"><b>Mr. Mandeep Tiwana</b><br/>CS Watch Program, CIVICUS</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Giyoum Kim</b><br/>Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)</p> <p align="center"><i>Moderator</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Mr. Budi Tjahjono</b><br/>Pax Romana / President, the NGO Committee on Human Rights (Geneva)</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Renate Bloem</b><br/>CIVICUS / Past President of CONGO and</p> <p align="center"><b>Felix Kirchmeier</b><br/>Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)</p> | <p align="center"><i>Panellists</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Arielle Wagenknecht</b><br/>International Federation of University Women (IFUW)</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Bisi Adebayo</b><br/>Inter-African Committee (IAC)</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Elly Pradervand</b><br/>Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF)</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Natalie Fisher-Spalton</b><br/>World Young Women's Christian Association (World WYCA)</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Danièle-Anne Rens</b><br/>Collège Universitaire Henry Dunant</p> <p align="center"><i>Moderator</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Madelein Rees</b><br/>OHCHR, Head, Women's Rights Unit</p> | <p align="center"><i>Panellists</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Dakmara-Ana Georgescu</b><br/>UNESCO International Bureau of Education</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Agneta Ucko</b><br/>Arigatou Foundation</p> <p align="center"><b>Dr. John Taylor</b><br/>International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) / NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion and Belief</p> <p align="center"><b>Dr. Charles Graves</b><br/>Interfaith International</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Ariane Hentsch</b><br/>Plateforme interreligieuse de Genève / Coexist - Youth interfaith Platform</p> <p align="center"><i>Moderator</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. María Lucía Uribe</b><br/>Arigatou Foundation and</p> <p align="center"><b>Dr. Marcel de Picciotto</b><br/>Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (OSMTH)</p> | <p align="center"><i>Panellists</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Muriel Berset</b><br/>Permanent Mission of Switzerland</p> <p align="center"><b>Mr. Martin Eaton</b><br/>Council of Europe Ad hoc Advisory Group on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (ED-EDCHR)</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Elena Ippoliti</b><br/>OHCHR, Methodology, Education and Training Unit</p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Felisa Tibbitts</b><br/>Executive Director, Human Rights Education Associates (HREA)</p> <p align="center"><b>Mr. Alfred Fernandez</b><br/>Director, Organisation internationale pour le droit à l'éducation et la liberté d'enseignement (OIDEI)</p> <p align="center"><i>Moderator</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Mr. Kazunari Fujii</b><br/>Soka Gakkai International (SGI) / Chair, NGO WG on HREL</p> | <p align="center"><i>Panellists</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Brigit van Hout</b><br/>OHCHR Anti-Discrimination Unit</p> <p align="center"><b>Mr. Kazunari Fujii</b><br/>SGI / WCAR NGO Forum 2001 Human Rights Education Resource Person</p> <p align="center"><b>Dr. Kanyana Mutombo</b><br/>Director, African Popular University</p> <p align="center"><b>Mr. Daniel Soley-Gutiérrez</b><br/>National Human Rights Institution of Costa Rica</p> <p align="center"><i>Moderator</i></p> <p align="center"><b>Ms. Michaela R. Told</b><br/>International Movement Against all forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)</p> |
| <i>Organised by</i><br><b>Pax Romana, CIVICUS and FES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>Organised by</i><br><b>IFUW and WWSF</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Organised by</i><br><b>Arigatou Foundation and OSMTH</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <i>Organised by</i><br><b>OIDEI and SGI</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>Organised by</i><br><b>FORUM-ASIA and IMADR</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

Human rights education encompasses all human rights issues and contributes to the prevention of violent conflicts, the promotion of equality and sustainable development and the enhancement of people's participation in decision-making. It contributes also to the promotion of gender equality, the rights of the child, religious tolerance, elimination of racial discrimination and xenophobia, minority rights, and rights of all other vulnerable groups of people. The purpose of these panels is to ensure the participation of NGOs in the global policy-making and the views and suggestions of civil society are reflected.



Facilitated by the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education & Learning (NGO WG on HREL) of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO)

## PANEL I The Role of Human Rights Defenders in Human Rights Education

03 March 2009, 13:00-15:00, Room XXIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Organisers: Pax Romana, CIVICUS and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

PANELLISTS: **Mr. Mugiyanto**, Chairperson, Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances, Indonesia;  
**Mr. Mandeep Tiwana**, CIVICUS; and

**Ms. Giyoun Kim**, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

MODERATORS: **Mr. Budi Tjahjono**, Pax Romana / President, the NGO Committee on Human Rights (Geneva); **Ms. Renate Bloem**, CIVICUS/ Former President of CONGO; and **Mr. Felix Kirchmeier**, FES

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One of the actors in the promotion and protection of human rights is the human rights defender. Human Rights Defenders have an important role in promoting human rights education especially through their work with victims and potential victims of human rights violations. This can be done by raising awareness of the rights of people which in turn can prevent the violations of those rights. The UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (A/RES/53/144) in article 15 mentions that *“Individual, non-governmental organisations and relevant institutions have an important role to play in contributing to making the public more aware of the questions relating to all human rights and fundamental freedom through activities such as education, training and research(...)”*.

Therefore, human rights defenders should adopt this role as human rights educators. This is to be carried out in complementary with the State obligation in providing the teaching of human rights as it is mentioned in article 15 of the Declaration: *“The State has the responsibility to promote and facilitate the teaching of human rights and fundamental freedom at all levels of education and to ensure that all those responsible for training of lawyers, law enforcement officers, the personnel of the armed forces and public officials include appropriate elements of human rights teaching in their training programme”*.

### **Mr. Mugiyanto, Chairperson, Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances**

Mugiyanto highlighted his personal experience of being abducted in 1998 due to his activities as a student human rights defender. He believes human rights defenders have a unique insight on human rights issues. This is due to their experience of defending human rights, matched with their experience of having their own rights violated. For these reasons he asserted that human rights defenders were key attributes to human rights education (HRE).

Currently in Indonesia there is a perception that the concept of human rights is imposed from the West. In this regard, human rights defenders in Asia are working hard in advocating and promoting the universality of human rights so as to dispel this perception. He continued by asserting that there was a need to mainstream HRE as a common human value to be defended by all, since HRE should not only be pursued by human rights defenders, but by all people and populations.

In order to give HRE a long-term and sustainable lifespan, Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances target young people and students as beneficiaries of HRE. Mugiyanto continued by speaking about several challenges faced in Asia and referred to impunity as a vicious cycle which was difficult to break. However, he believes that through generations of HRE the chain of impunity can indeed be broken.

Another challenge he mentioned was the campaign on the war against terrorism. This particular campaign has stirred up some fundamental religious groups which have led to violence against civilians. He believes that the situation has worsened with the economic crisis as many people feel frustrated and have sort to express themselves through religious fundamentalism.

### **Mr. Mandeep Tiwana, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation**

Tiwana spoke about CIVICUS's Civil Society Watch Program (CSW). It aims to mobilise quick, principled and effective responses to events that threaten civil society's fundamental rights to collectively express, associate and organise. CSW builds on CIVICUS's long-standing role as a global voice in defending civic rights. It also contributes to CIVICUS's mission to strengthen civil society worldwide and protect space for civic expression, particularly in those areas where it is under threat.

The threats civil society faces include, among others, the introduction or existence of laws restricting the registration or funding of organisations, systematic targeting of human rights defenders, including arrest, detention and restrictions on travel, arbitrary closure of organisations, and barriers or attacks against the exercise of the rights to free expression and assembly. In 2008 alone, CIVICUS tracked such threats in 61 countries. In the same year, over 14 countries introduced or sought to introduce laws restricting civil society and undermining human rights.

To better enable its efforts to track threats to civil society, CIVICUS is piloting an Early Warning System in partnership with the International Centre for Not for Profit Law (ICNL). A growing number of countries are introducing laws, policies and practices that stifle individuals' rights to free association, assembly and expression - the ability of civil society to operate freely.

In every country, civil society faces a multitude of such threats to its existence. These threats, however, are often only addressed after the work of civil society has already been restricted. CIVICUS and ICNL believe that by addressing the first signs of danger, both activists and decision-makers can be alerted earlier possibly preventing such threats from progressing further. The Early Warning System aims to identify the preparation of restrictive laws or the move towards restrictive practices so that effective advocacy can take place before enactment.

The Early Warning System is being piloted from September 2008 to March 2009 in Vietnam, Philippines, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, USA, Lebanon and the Solomon Islands along-with civil society partners in each of these countries. Partners identify threats which may emanate from government organs or from powerful non-state actors, caused by the concerns regarding national security, terrorism, foreign influence and the desire to force a particular political agenda.

Twelve broad categories of indicators have been developed to track threats. These range from negative statements by key State actors questioning the legitimacy or integrity of civil society, to the arbitrary detention of activists and raids and closures of organisations. Restrictions on the media, whether through increased censorship by State agencies or the introduction of repressive media laws, are deemed to be an indication of impending reduction of civil society space. Other indicators include the growing influence of the private sector. Negative reports from non-state actors such as important think-tanks and political groups on key human rights concerns are also considered as indicators, in addition to physical attacks and threatening statements made against civil society members by non-state actors.

Threats to civil society are scanned through both media and official sources. The project includes monitoring of the mainstream media, worldwide web, television, radio channels, underground publications and civil society blogs. Additionally, official sources such as websites of key government functionaries and departments, court decisions, National Human Rights Institution reports and official press releases are monitored, as they are valuable sources of information for impending threats.

Country partners rate threats according to three levels:

- (i) Requiring urgent action.
- (ii) Requiring follow-up and.
- (iii) To be observed or monitored further.

A range of actions could be initiated based on identification of these threats. These include in-depth analysis of the existing and proposed legislation, fact-finding missions to publicise a particular repressive situation, public awareness and advocacy campaigns, high level meetings with key dignitaries, lobbying with strategic groups, submissions to national, regional and international bodies including mandate holders of the UN Special Procedures of human rights as well as petitioning of judicial and quasi-judicial bodies along with country partners.

Tiwana also gave some examples of threats that had been identified in the pilot phase of the project. They include: the introduction of restricting charities and civil society law in Ethiopia which will severely curtail the work of human rights and advocacy for NGOs in the country; and passing of restrictive amendments by Parliament to the law governing religion in Kazakhstan which will severely constrain the activities of faith based civil society groups.

He continued with the cases of murders and attempted murders of human rights defenders in the Philippines committed by the alleged suspects of State agents. He also pointed to the discrimination in official grants to civil society organisations for supporting abortion and contraception in the United States.

On completion of the pilot phase of the Early Warning System in March 2009, CIVICUS and ICNL will identify and fill the gaps in the project's methodology, particularly to refine the indicators that are used to describe and predict the risks.

Starting in mid-2009, the project is hoped to expand into other countries with the aim of gradually developing a worldwide network to effectively predict and counter threats to civil society.

Threats identified are then distributed across CIVICUS's networks and posted on the CIVICUS's website. They appear in their weekly electronic magazine (E-CIVICUS) and feature in CSW's newsletter (Civil Society Watch Monthly Bulletin) as well.

**Ms. Giyoung Kim, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

Kim shared the experience of FORUM-ASIA in carrying out the training and study programmes for the human rights defenders in the region.

FORUM-ASIA has devised two types of regional human rights training programmes, however, once undertaking the training programme some human rights defenders were not able to take materials back to their own countries in the fear of being profiled by the government authorities which often put heavy surveillance on the human rights related materials.

She continued to highlight the situation faced by human rights defenders that whilst carrying out their advocacy and human rights education work, they are often subject to arrests, detention and harassment. In China, more than 300 defenders have faced a series of persecution from the government since last December, because they conducted a public campaign on the Charter 08, a contextualised version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In Burma/Myanmar, the attacks and violence against human rights defenders by the military government as well as non-state actors – e.g. Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA) - are also widely noted.

Referring to the tenth anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, she asserted the urgent need to fully implement the article 16 of the Declaration, which emphasises the important role of human rights defenders in making the public more aware of questions relating to human rights through activities such as education, training and research.

She also added that States should create favourable environment for human rights defenders to freely and properly undertake their own mandate of advocacy and human rights work, and in this regard, the draft UN Declaration on HREL should include a specific provision to address the protection needs faced by human rights defenders.

**DISCUSSION**

The floor then discussed the importance of the protection of human rights defenders.

It was also said that the protection of human rights defenders needed to be reflected in the draft UN declaration on human rights education and training, currently being prepared by the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council. This declaration should provide measures of protection for human rights defenders in promoting HRE.

Tjahjono and Bloem concluded the meeting by declaring that the notion of universality of human rights is crucial, and that it must be considered as common human values for all.

The theory of specificity and particularity of certain regions will become the hindrance for the promotion of human rights. Human dignity is based on human rights and the respect for human rights. HRE and training thus needs to transcend such specificity and particularity of regions. Knowledge and understanding on the UN Mechanism on Human Rights needs to be transferable and should be broadened to fit all aspects of human life in each and every community, regardless of differing cultures and traditions.

## PANEL II

### Safe School Environment for the Girl Child through Human Rights Education Perspective

12 March 2009, 14:00-16:00, Room XXII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Organisers: International Federation of University Women (IFUW) and  
Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF)

PANELLISTS: *Ms. Arielle Wagenknecht*, IFUW; *Ms. Bisi Adebayo*, Inter-African Committee (IAC); *Ms. Elly Pradervand*, WWSF; *Ms. Natalie Fisher-Spalton*, World Young Women's Christian Association (World WYCA) and  
*Ms. Danièle-Anne Rens*, Collège Universitaire Henry Dunant

MODERATOR: *Ms. Madelein Rees*, Head, the Women's Rights Unit of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

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Goal No.2 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. All children do not have equal chances to education. Girls are more likely to be kept out of school for reasons related to poverty, discrimination and violence which is the way that schools reflect a whole society. The same forms of violence which women suffer throughout their lives – physical, sexual and psychological – are present in the lives of girls in and around their schools.

Education in a safe environment is a human right for every girl. Through human rights education and learning (HREL), teachers, administrators, school employees, fellow students and outsiders will be aware of the specific vulnerability of girls. The International Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 42 states: *States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention on the rights of the child widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.*

Opening the meeting, Madelein Rees, Head of the Women's Rights Unit of OHCHR, stressed that given the current economic climate, it was unlikely that MDGs would be met by 2015. The reasons she gave were the lack of implementation of Goal No.2 of the MDGs: *to ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling*, and Goal 3: *to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.*

#### **Ms. Arrielle Wagenknecht, International Federation of University Women (IFUW)**

Wagenknecht highlighted the issues of threatening difficulties to girls with a particular focus on the school environment reflecting a whole society. The situation in Switzerland, and especially in Geneva, is not better nor is it worse than that in most European countries.

She stated that there is violence against girls especially here in our own neighbourhood and that more specific data particularly from the police force is necessary, pointing to the need for a distinction between boys and girls when reporting incidents.

She stated that it was overwhelming that in the year 2007-2008, five children aged 4 to 15 out of 1000 were victims of violence. Different programmes for prevention have been set up nationally across Switzerland including a very interesting year long programme entitled "My body belongs to me" which is exactly in line with human right education.

#### **Ms. Elly Pradervand, Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF)**

Education is a human right and ensuring access to a safe school environment is the responsibility of the State. Under the International Law, the State must ensure, at a minimum, the universal access to primary education. That obligation cannot be satisfied if girls do not feel safe in school. Pradervand said that the failure to meet these obligations could not be justified by lack of resources. When States fail to address violence against girls in schools, it is a failure of political will as well. Education is both a right in itself and a pathway to the enjoyment of other rights.

Statistics indicates the following facts:

- 62 million primary school-aged girls are not in school;
- More young girls aged 15-19 years old die from unsafe abortions and birth complications than from any other cause;
- More than 100 million girls, some as young as 12, are expected to marry over the next decade despite

- international legislation outlawing the early marriage; and,
- Roughly 20 million girls are out of school in war zones.

WWSF sees human rights as a development concept and human rights education (HRE) equally as a development process. She listed several reasons why many girls were not in school, among others, poverty and discrimination which remained huge barriers for girls in many parts of the world.

She said that when families struggled to find the money for school fees, uniforms and books, girls were the ones most likely to miss out since they were often required to stay at home to help earn money, or look after younger siblings.

Girls are also deprived of education when the school environment is hostile to them, when schools are located at a distance and many parents believe the distance is too far for girls to travel safely. A lack of separate toilets for boys and girls in school can act as a barrier as well. Cultural norms can also inhibit girls from accessing education in many developing countries.

In conclusion, she said that a safe environment in schools, including facilities, curricula and strategies adapted to the specific needs of girls *must* be provided.

***Ms. Bisi Adebayo, representing Inter-African Committee IAC***

The girl child, just as her male counterpart, is entitled to education in a safe environment as a fundamental human right. However, Adebayo said, approximately 500 million children worldwide start primary school, but more than 100 million children drop out before completing four years of primary school and two thirds of these drop outs are girls.

A safe learning environment with equal opportunities for children irrespective of their sex is crucial to the enrolment, retention, performance and, ultimately, completion of education of the girl child in the African context. The learning environment of the girl child is faced with different challenges.

In most African countries the 2005 Human Development Report shows adult literacy to be higher amongst males than females. Reasons for this disparity include, among others, sexual harassment, rape, poverty, inadequate sanitary facilities, authoritarian teaching style, early marriage and other traditional practices such as female genital mutilation.

She continued saying that services established in the context of emergencies and disasters were often provided with no regard to the sex of the recipients, and they often inadvertently excluded girls because of their vulnerabilities in terms of physical security and exposure to physical violence.

Prevailing culture and social attitudes influence the perception of the girl and her role in society. Therefore emphasis must be placed on the development of culturally appropriate responses and strategies.

She asserted that the implementation of gender sensitive policies safeguarding the rights of the girl child would ensure a safe learning environment for her and ultimately improve the disparities of male and female ratio of education related indices.

***Ms. Natalie Fisher-Spalton, representing the World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)***

YWCA is a global movement of women and young women with an outreach of 25 million in 125 countries and over 22,000 communities.

The organisation advocates for peace, justice, and human rights, and has been doing so for over a century. A range of programmes are conducted from policy advocacy for legislation against violence toward women to providing 60 emergency shelters for women and their children in 17 countries. Support programmes and services as well as formal and non-formal education are also provided. The elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls is a top priority for the organisation.

Education is the key to all forms of development. However, violence continues to be a major barrier to education for millions of girls across the globe.

Fisher-Spalton stated that girls faced a greater risk of sexual violence, neglect and forced prostitution than boys with the perpetrators most likely to be male teachers and classmates.

YWCA organised a Youth Forum in Liberia in the first week in March 2009. A series of recommendations

were presented by young women on the theme of keeping girls safe.

These recommendations include:

- Eliminate school fees; establish mechanisms to address harassment of girls in school; establish student-faculty senates to address harassment cases;
- Provide alternative training and non-formal education programmes for girls out of school; abolish penalisation toward young mothers; and,
- Provide accurate non-judgmental sex education. The lack of sanitary facilities for girls were noted as well as the risk for girls travelling to and from school, particularly in rural areas and low income urban areas.

She appealed that education and training opportunities for girls must increase in non-formal education and training, for both technical and soft skills. She continued to stress the importance of working with teenagers to reduce dating violence, with local authorities to ensure.

All teens and young mothers should have access to flexible tailored education and support and with men and boys to change attitudes toward gender inequality and the acceptability of violence.

She also stated that education systems ought to be approached, including Ministries of Education to ensure better awareness of violence and its consequences and to make the changes needed to end the culture of impunity.

Governments in partnership with families, communities and civil society must take active measures to protect girls and young women as well as to support men and boys' role in preventing and eliminating all forms of violence.

***Ms. Danièle-Anne Rens, Collège Universitaire Henry Dunant***

Rens stated that the overall title of panel II was not a subject directly addressed by the Henry Dunant University College, however the problems had much wider impacts as vouched for in the Convention on Rights of the Child. It is in this framework that the Henry Dunant University College works.

The Henry Dunant University College is a legal foundation under the Swiss law and is monitored by the Swiss Confederation. The College organises training sessions on the theme of the protection of human rights under the United Nations system. These training sessions are directed towards Spanish and French-speaking adult participants including professors, government officials, journalists, and actors in defence of human rights in civil society. The main sessions of the College award a diploma of training in human rights, with specific reference to economic, social, and cultural rights.

Since 1997, the College has developed a programme on the protection of human rights based on the UN system and mechanisms, directed towards indigenous women leaders of the Americas. Thanks to the support from a number of different organisations (Swiss and international), 6 to 10 indigenous women have been able to have their travel, accommodation and registration fees financed each year. We learned that in order to receive training scholarships, indigenous women leaders must commit themselves to bring back their learning to their communities. To date, 60 women have already shared their acquired knowledge with around 40,000 women and girls in their home communities.

The training focuses on an understanding of fundamental freedom and rights and knowledge of the protection system of the UN. It also provides them with a better understanding for their own protection and the protection of their children. The courses are based on four units, the first of which is distance learning with the remaining units taking place in Geneva. These units are then awarded with a diploma on human rights. She concluded that in the future, it was hoped that both men and boys would also have the opportunity to attend these courses.

**PANEL III**  
**Intercultural and Interfaith Education:**  
**An Imperative for Achieving Freedom of Religion and Mutual Understanding**

Friday, 13 March, 14:00-16:00, Room XXII

Organisers: Arigatou Foundation and Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (OSMTH)

PANELLISTS: *Ms. Dakmara-Ana Georgescu*, UNESCO International Bureau of Education; *Ms. Agneta Ucko*, Arigatou Foundation; *Dr. John Taylor*, International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) / NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion and Belief; *Dr. Charles Graves*, Interfaith International; and *Ms. Ariane Hentsch*, Plateforme interreligieuse de Genève / Coexist - Youth interfaith Platform.

MODERATORS: *Dr. Marcel de Picciotto*, OSMTH and *Ms. María Lucía Uribe*, Arigatou Foundation

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The panel aimed to look at the main issues concerning discrimination on the grounds based on religion or beliefs, with special emphasis on what has been done in the field of interfaith and intercultural dialogue and education, current perspectives, challenges and progress.

***Ms. Dakmara Georgescu, UNESCO International Bureau of Education***

Georgescu highlighted that today's curriculum trends in formal and non-formal education was the promotion of living cohesively through intercultural education.

While approaches may differ, intercultural education in most cases is a national priority within education and curriculum reforms. These are taught in a variety of ways: promoting the appreciation of one's own culture, of other cultures; fostering respect and tolerance for diversity; and learning from one another in order to engage in a constructive dialogue.

She stated that there was an understanding of values at the core of the definition of culture, which included other concepts such as social habits, norms and rules, symbols, language, knowledge, identity, identities, artistic manifestations, mindsets and beliefs.

She underlined the following trends in the development of curriculum to foster intercultural education: (i) The multilayered approach of identity, not only promoting a local or national identity but emphasising that individual and community identities are forged in a more complex way; (ii) The multi-linguistic approach which enhances learning about others, this includes the teaching of foreign languages and minority languages in schools; (iii) Intercultural studies are embedded in history, language courses or life skills courses; and (iv) Focus on competencies for life and work.

Conceptualisation of intercultural education is one of the main challenges for the implementation of intercultural education. Another major challenge is its application in post-conflict countries, often not yet prepared to deal with the *otherness*.

Quality education is also a concern in the application of intercultural education and the need for substantive capacity development and adequate know-how for teachers, decision makers and other stakeholders. The last challenge pointed out was the lack of knowledge on how to assess competences for life, or the outcomes of peace and intercultural education.

***Dr. John Taylor, International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) / NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion and Belief***

Taylor made a connection between intercultural and interfaith education and the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief who gave high importance to education for understanding and recommended in her report the use of the Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions or Beliefs in Public Schools as a potential worldwide guideline.

The final recommendations of the International Consultative Conference on School Education in relation to Freedom of Religion or Belief, Tolerance and Non-discrimination, organised by the former Special Rapporteur together with the Spanish government in Madrid, 2001, underlines the importance of school education to challenge religious discrimination between and within religious communities, and between religious and secular communities.

The UN General Assembly in November 2008 referred to the proposal for a UN decade for Inter-religious

and intercultural dialogue, understanding, and cooperation for peace and proposed it to UNESCO and other UN agencies to investigate its feasibility. Religion is on the agenda of the UN with positive responses from civil society, religious communities and a good number of UN agencies and governments.

He concluded stating that 2010 would be a Year of Rapprochement among Cultures, with the support and implementation of UNESCO, for cooperative programmes on the topic of intercultural and interfaith education.

**Dr. Charles Graves, Interfaith International**

Graves spoke about his organisation as a concrete example to promote interfaith cooperation in the area of human rights and shared specific cases of violations of freedom of religion and belief. Interfaith International provides an opportunity for people to meet despite their differences in a practical interfaith and intercultural experience within the context of human rights.

He noted that discussions about defamation of religion and freedom of religion could be held between States. Careful organisation of those discussions can avoid the impression that States may feel difficult as if they are interpreted as committed to a particular position about religions.

He said that some NGOs had difficulties participating in human rights debates due to restrictions imposed by their governments. Interfaith International provides these NGOs with accreditation and the opportunity to speak at side events at the Human Rights Council.

Graves also spoke about issues of religious discrimination and intolerance within religious communities and the efforts of Interfaith International to promote dialogue between minority and majority groups in certain countries. Interfaith International also supports initiatives against xenophobia such as the Durban Review Conference to be held in April 2009 as well as the Civil Society Forum.

**Ms. Agneta, Ucko Arigatou Foundation**

Ucko introduced her organisation, Arigatou Foundation, a Buddhist and Japanese initiative, and a Global Network of Religions for Children, GNRC - the only worldwide interreligious network dedicated to work for children. She presented a publication recently developed by the Arigatou Foundation together with UNESCO and UNICEF, titled "Learning to Live Together" named after one of the UNESCO four pillars for education.

If major religious traditions come out and speak together on human rights and the rights of the child, there is a greater chance to make a difference. One of the objectives of the material is to look at what is being taught in the different faith traditions about the 'other' and it is hoped that this type of initiative will help create peace builders thus preventing conflicts.

The material is developed to help youth leaders, teachers and facilitators who want to promote interfaith and intercultural understanding. The unique characteristic of this manual is that it was conceptualised by scholars' secular thinkers and practitioners from several religious traditions. Another characteristic is that it was field tested in 15 different religious and cultural settings, so as to understand how the values prevalent in interfaith and intercultural understanding are conducive for harmonious living.

The material is available in three languages and it is a contribution to human rights and peace education. The methodologies were based on the concept of role modelling, placing great importance on those who use it. She noted in conclusion that this initiative did not avoid putting on the table and work on the religious identity, which was sometimes more difficult to deal with.

**Ms. Ariane Hentsch, Plateforme interreligieuse de Genève / Coexist - Youth interfaith Platform**

Hentsch based her presentation on a survey about spirituality of young people presented in 2002 in the book "*Chemins de spiritualité. Jeunes en quête de sens*" written by Gabriel Ringlet and on her own experience within a local youth interfaith platform she co-founded. In addition, she also spoke about her experience with an international youth forum she organised for the World Council of Churches.

She referred to a survey which studied 500 European university students aged 18 to 30, which looked at understanding how young adults manage their quest for meaning and their relationship to organised religion. The survey shows that students in their great majority express a genuine yearning for spirituality, to be understood not in a strictly religious perspective but as a permanent quest for meaning. Youth

consider organised religions as one source of meaning among others. For many students, their beliefs and observances are not officially embedded in organised religion but rather their quest is personal and proactive.

In 2004, the Youth Interfaith Platform, a local organisation now renamed Coexist – was consulted about religious pluralism and its relation to interfaith and personal behaviour. The results show that pluralism should enable the adherents of different faiths to go beyond tolerance for each other and establish a respectful relationship. Pluralism should lead to a clear distinction between religion and politics, religious and institutional matters, and religious and cultural features.

She spoke about the importance of a religious education that integrates religious pluralism. Youth seek guidance through the plethora of religious traditions, and not through a unilateral imposition of one dogma, they feel in charge of defining their religious and secular identity in conjunction with others and are critical of religious teachings, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The presentations were followed by questions and comments including:

- (i) How religious education can be included in HRE;
- (ii) What concrete actions have been taken in relation to article 18 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights to promote HRE; and
- (iii) What form of education needed to foster freedom of religion and belief - whether only religious education, interreligious or interfaith education.

In relation to the first and second questions, it was pointed out that there were many initiatives already developed in Europe that helped ministries design courses on interreligious education.

There is a study indicating that in many European countries religion is taught comparatively as multi religion, or as history of religion, and not necessarily as instructing about a certain belief. However, there are cases in some countries where religious instruction about a particular faith still prevails.

It was also pointed out that the World Programme for Human Rights Education needed to provide more tools and promote effective experiences and good practices for people and organisations. It is also important to respect the policies of each country in relation to the inclusion of religious education in schools.

In response to the third question, Taylor explained that religious education was categorised in three areas: learning religion, learning about religion and learning from religion. Learning religion refers to instructing about a particular religion. Learning about religions refers to teaching from a descriptive and historical approach, comparing values, beliefs and practices. Learning from religions emphasises on creating reflective spaces regarding questions to major religious and current issues.

Respect for freedom of religion and belief is still a complex issue in many countries today. The discussion underlined that religion, in some places, was exploited for political ends, fuelling discrimination based on religion or belief, and therefore restricting or denying the access to health services, public education of public posts to certain minority religious groups.

Intercultural and interfaith education and dialogue is a response to promote freedom of religion and belief and an effort to bring about mutual understanding and respect to societies. It is an area still to be refined and further conceptualised in order to be easily measured and evaluated.

Intercultural and interfaith education and dialogue are already on the agenda of the United Nations, its agencies and many NGOs and governments. It has become a priority in our current interdependent and globalised world that has needs for living and working together. It is the right time to mainstream interfaith and intercultural education into the human rights arena and promote it in those countries where religious and cultural discrimination is still a reality, in other places where it can serve as a preventive measure and in post conflict regions where reconciliation and respect for the other are needed.

## PANEL IV

### **The UN Framework for Human Rights Education and Civil Society Participation: Draft UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and the World Programme for Human Rights Education**

Monday, 16 March 13:00-15:00 Room XXI, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Organisers: Organisation internationale pour le droit à l'éducation et la liberté d'enseignement (OIDE), and  
Soka Gakkai International (SGI)

PANELLISTS: **Ms. Muriel Berset**, Permanent Mission of Switzerland; **Mr. Martin Eaton**, Council of Europe Ad hoc Advisory Group on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (ED-EDCHR); **Ms. Elena Ippoliti**, the Methodology, Education and Training Unit of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); **Ms. Felisa Tibbitts**, Executive Director, Human Rights Education Associates (HREA); and **Mr. Alfred Fernandez**, Director, OIDE.

MODERATOR: **Mr. Kazunari Fujii**, SGI / Chair, NGO WG on HREL

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The Advisory Committee of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) prepared a progress report on the drafting of a UN declaration on human rights education and training and submitted it to the HRC 10th session. The World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) is concluding its first phase in 2009. The meeting focused particularly on civil society participation in the context of these specific elements of the UN framework for human rights education (HRE). As an example at the European regional level, the currently ongoing initiative of the Council of Europe for setting up an instrument on education for democratic citizenship and (HRE) was also briefed at this meeting.

#### **Ms. Muriel Berset, Permanent Mission of Switzerland**

Reiterating paragraph 5 (a) of the UN General Assembly resolution A/60/251 (3 April, 2006) - the Human Rights Council (HRC) shall, inter alia, "*promote human rights education and learning (...)*" as the mandate of the Council, Berset emphasised the political will of the Member States in adoption of the original resolution (HRC resolution 6/10) of September 2007 by which the Council requested its Advisory Committee to prepare a draft UN declaration on human rights education and training (HRET).

She mentioned on the Platform for HRET in the HRC, an informal group announced in March 2008, consisting of four governments of Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco and Switzerland, to keep HRET on the HRC agenda. She made a remark on the numerous answers to the questionnaire circulated last year by the Advisory Committee to governments, international organisations, National Human Rights Institutions, and civil society actors including NGOs.

She also expressed the view that the timeframe for submission of the draft UN declaration should be by the next main session of the Council in March 2010. She expressed that all regional groups of the Member States could be represented in the Platform, calling for a larger representation and participation of the Member States.

#### **Mr. Martin Eaton, Council of Europe Ad hoc Advisory Group on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (ED-EDCHR)**

In 2006 the Steering Committee on Education of the Council of Europe commissioned a feasibility study on a framework policy document on education for democratic citizenship and human rights. Upon request from the Council of Europe and with help from a panel of experts, Eaton produced the study paper in 2007 and suggested to the Council of Europe a new instrument aiming at addressing a high commitment, providing a monitoring system, with comprehensive and up-to-date concepts, setting out clear definitions and detailed policies, as well as providing recognition and support for NGOs and practitioners. The Steering Committee welcomed the study and asked for two illustrative drafts to be produced, one binding and one non-binding. Both drafts have a similar content. It is the form that differs. One is a draft Framework Convention, the other a Charter without the status of a Convention. In the Convention version there is provision for a supranational monitoring system, with regular periodic national reports on implementation to the Committee of Ministers, which would be assisted by an advisory committee in the task of evaluating progress made and encouraging good practice. In the Charter version the emphasis is on regular national reviews and cooperation with other Member States in the evaluation and adaptation of policies.

He projected that while it was possible for the Committee to decide to drop the whole project, more likely

it would select the form by the majority preference and would recommend it to the Committee of Ministers.

***Ms. Elena Ippoliti, the Methodology, Education and Training Unit of OHCHR***

Ippoliti presented the current status of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) from a technical and procedural point of view from its first (2005-2009) to second phase (2010-). The WPHRE is open-ended and there is no limited timeframe structured in consecutive phases so as to advance the implementation of human rights education (HRE) programmes in all sectors. The first phase of the World Programme (2005-2009) focuses on the integration of HRE into the primary and secondary school systems (initially 2005-2007, and extended to 2009 by the Human Rights Council resolution 6/24).

The Plan of Action of the first phase was developed by education professionals and HRE practitioners and adopted by all UN Member States (General Assembly resolution 59/113 B, 14 July 2005). With regard to the national action on the side of authority, the main duty-bearer is the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with all relevant actors, according to the Plan of Action.

As for HRE in the school system, there are a number of necessary components including; development of education policies; policy implementation; Facilitation of learning environment to practise respect for human rights; provision of teaching and learning tools; and development of professional skills and training of teachers and other relevant personnel. Information on related activities undertaken in around 50 countries was received, and both achievements and challenges became clearer of which some were peculiar to the school system. At the conclusion of the first phase, Member States will be called upon to provide their final evaluation reports to the UN which will be transmitted through the UN Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee of the WPHRE to the General Assembly in 2010.

As for the second phase, she said that the thematic focus was to be decided by the Human Rights Council and that consultations with relevant actors would be ideal. The WPHRE is a common platform between governmental and non-governmental actors. It provides additional legitimacy to HRE activities by civil society actors. Dissemination of information among relevant actors and contribution to relevant UN policy-making can be carried out by civil society actors including NGOs.

***Ms. Felisa Tibbitts, Executive Director, Human Rights Education Associates (HREA)***

The link between education and human rights that quality education in and for human rights are essential to ensure accountability and provide an ethical framework for the development of just and peaceable communities. The activities of the HREA are principally based on the online network of civil society actors at the global scale. HREA provides services in four areas: training for human rights defenders and educators; training and learning materials; maximum utilisation of online IT technology and networking of human rights educators and activists; and research, evaluation and policy development. The contributions of HREA include demonstration of the civil society value for the implementation of human rights education (HRE) such as special expertise in HRE content and methodology; flexibility and responsiveness to new opportunities for HRE; long-term commitment to human rights; support to duty-bearers in implementing HRE; and leadership and commitment during the UN Decade for HRE (1995-2004), having provided feedback to OHCHR on the implementation of this initiative.

Tibbitts stressed that the global networking of civil society was especially important for promoting human rights and HRE. The HRE movement and related network have expanded exponentially since the early 1990s. Increased interest in human rights came with the end of the Cold War, the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the end of apartheid. These coincide with a time in which OHCHR, Council of Europe and other human rights institutions promoted HRE; the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the UN Decade for HRE (1995-2004). The development and expanded use of information technologies have also played a vital role in expanding HRE; and, the growth of the international HRE movement is illustrated by the growing membership of HREA's Global HRE List, launched in 1999.

She shared her perspective for future developments: the expansion of social networking among civil society and other HRE actors should continue; increased diversification among civil society members engaged in HRE is necessary; and, increasing use of social networking platforms for advocacy and policy development in HRE is indispensable. She also added that strengthening of work of HRE movement at national level, with links to regional and international networks, would be an important component.

**Mr. Alfred Fernandez, Director, Organisation internationale pour le droit à l'éducation et la liberté d'enseignement (OIDEL)**

Fernandez stressed the important role of civil society actors to participate in the process of the international policy-making on the norms-setting. He also praised several Member States for their commitment to HRE and stressed that their actual action demonstrated a political will which could manifest through a constructive collaboration with NGOs. In this sense, he further emphasised the vital nature of the constructive and constant consultation between NGOs and Member States.

He emphasised the need for human rights training for citizens so that they could claim their rights along with the understanding of their responsibility. HRE is thus empowerment of people, in the same vein, HRE needs to be integrated in school curricula. He pointed to the need for the linking of HRE with fundamental and ethical knowledge, as well as philosophical knowledge and the logics of values justification. He concluded that the draft UN declaration on human rights education and training should therefore include the context of teachers training, that it should define HRE and that it should not be too lengthy.

**DISCUSSION**

Representatives of Switzerland, Morocco, Costa Rica and Italy highlighted the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training, an informal inter-governmental group in the Council that was made by these four Member States. In the discussion, delegates of four governments also took the floor.

The representative of Morocco drew attention to the importance of human rights education and training and inclusive approach, taking into consideration the role of civil society including NGOs.

The representative of Costa Rica also mentioned on the WPHRE that the first phase was now approaching to its conclusion and the second phase needed to be prepared. She informed that the Platform was preparing a procedural resolution on this matter which was to be submitted shortly to the current session of the Council.

The representative of Italy wished for bridging the Platform with the regional groups of the Council as it would contribute to foster projects such as drafting a UN declaration on human rights education and training, and said that the declaration should include defined goals and commitments.

The representative of Slovenia said that human rights education (HRE) was a priority for Slovenia, and recognised active promotion of HRE in human rights policies in the UN system. She also raised a question on the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the UN, and the possibility for other Member States to join the Platform.

Ippoliti responded that through the secretariats of the UN OHCHR and the Council of Europe made regular contacts and information exchange in mutual cooperation. Also mentioned was that further coordinating initiatives and better synergy could be a new venture and it would be up to the Member States. A possible seminar on the draft UN declaration on human rights education and training in Geneva could be an opportunity.

Berset responded that amplifying the Platform would be welcomed with Slovenia and other Member States joining.

Regarding the question on useful materials and available languages, Ippoliti responded that OHCHR tried to make publications available in the UN six official languages and yet there was plenty to do in this regard.

On the question of progress made by the Member States within the framework of the WPHRE, Ippoliti responded that governments reported their steps taken and transmitted to the UN system but unfortunately OHCHR did not have the capacity to go into each country and there was no UN mechanism to keep track of the report.

On the question of privatised or private schools that would not be obliged to integrate HRE, Tibbitts responded that even when governments expressed an interest in HRE it was still the responsibility of state schools to implement HRE, thus it would be up to the school whether this agenda be prioritised or not. However, she added that often it had been private schools that had taken this up as they had the flexibility of the curriculum.

## PANEL V

### The Role of Human Rights Education in Combating Racism and Discrimination

24 March 2009, 14:00-16:00, Room XXIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Organisers: Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and  
International Movement Against all forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)

PANELLISTS: *Ms. Brigit van Hout*, the Anti-Discrimination Unit of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); *Mr. Kazunari Fujii*, SGI/ WCAR NGO Forum 2001 Human Rights Education Resource Person; *Dr. Kanyana Mutombo*, Director, African Popular University; *Mr. Daniel Soley-Gutiérrez*, National Human Rights Institution of Costa Rica;

MODERATOR: *Ms. Michaela R. Told*, IMADR

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In light of the upcoming Durban Review Conference 2009, the representatives from civil society, National Human Rights Institution and the Anti-Discrimination Unit of OHCHR gave their perspectives on the experience and challenges in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), paras.125-139. The following topics have been addressed in this Panel discussion:

1. Human rights education in the DDPA and the current DRC process – framework-setting
2. The role of Human Rights education to combat racism and discrimination – a NGO perspective
3. Developing school curriculum to combat racism and discrimination – a case study from Rwanda
4. The role of National Human Rights Institutions– a case study from Costa Rica

Introducing the speakers, Michaela R. Told briefed the theme and discussion topics on combating racism and discrimination and linked it with human rights education.

#### ***Ms. Brigit van Hout, the Anti-Discrimination Unit of OHCHR***

Hout started her presentation with an overview of the Durban Review Conference and the DDPA., She stated that DDPA was the most comprehensive instrument and tool for combating racism and that 80% of the provisions of the DDPA were directed towards States, but there is also a role for National Human Rights Institutions, civil society, youth groups, NGOs, private sector, media, and regional and international organisations.

There is a broad consensus on the provisions relating to human rights education (HRE) as a means for eradicating racism. There are 14 provisions which make specific reference to HRE. HRE is the largest segment as a topic in the DDPA. This reflects the importance of HRE in general and anti-racism education in particular to the struggle against racism. Those highlights include:

- The special role of NGOs
- The importance of both formal and non formal HRE
- The call to educational authorities and the private sector to develop textbooks
- Importance of teaching International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- The importance of focusing on young people and teachers
- Repeated mention of the need to train civil servants with the explicit mention of immigration officers, border police, and staff of detention centres, judges and lawyers

In 2006 the UN General Assembly decided to convene a review conference (A/RES/61/149) in 2009, in order to assess the implementation of the DDPA, which is to be held on April 20-24 2009, with a draft outcome document that is being negotiated on at the moment.

The draft outcome document has also been the work of regional contributions and the proposals have been consolidated. The latest text has been stream-lined and is a rolling text comprising of 17 pages but by no means an adopted text. There are two references to HRE in this.

With regard to achievements since 2001, she stated that the Anti-Discrimination Unit (ADU) had a broad mandate which did not include systematic monitoring, but ADU did receive information on a voluntary basis on any initiatives that had been taken from various stakeholders, for example those taken by UNESCO.

She referred to several avenues for NGOs with expertise to implement the DDPA:

- To design anti-racism education material
- To conduct anti-racism projects and programmes
- To participate in the development of national action plans against racism which should include a HRE component
- Identify existing good practices and share them with others
- To monitor, assess and hold States accountable for implementing the provisions on HRE adopted in Durban

She concluded by stating that OHCHR's anti-racism programme after the Durban Review Conference would continue to be inspired by the provisions in the DDP, and in addition, any new mandates that might be assigned by the Durban Review Conference. She also added that there was a broad mandate but with limited resources, such a programme had to be strategic, prioritising the objectives.

**Mr. Kazunari Fujii, SGI / WCAR NGO Forum 2001 Human Rights Education Resource Person**

Fujii spoke about the role of human rights education (HRE) in dealing with the root causes as a sustainable and fundamental solution to the racism and discrimination issues. He stated that the root causes existed and manifested both within the civil society and in the acts of the State authority.

He referred to the latest survey conducted by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA). According to the result of the survey, he mentioned, 70-80% of the surveyed victims of racism and discrimination had never reported to any authority of the State. He stressed that the psychological impact on the victims must be carefully considered for better solutions. In order to combat racism and discrimination, a multi pronged approach was necessary for both the *prevention* and the *protection* of the victims of racism and discrimination, and the empowerment of potential victims is essential.

With regard to the root causes in our daily life that are easily overlooked, he cited an example of teaching to children. The teaching of "Do not speak to strangers" and "Do not speak to foreigners" in childhood would make a different effect in nurturing a human being and formation of the behaviour pattern of the person. He said that in some parts of the French speaking region in Switzerland, "*Il ne faut pas parler à des étrangers* (foreigners / strangers in English)" was taught to children for their safety while in France "*Il ne faut pas parler à des inconnues* (unknown / unacquainted persons)" was taught for the same purpose.

He also referred to "racism and discrimination in language" indicating that an insulting word regarding a specific ethnic group or cultural origin was part of daily language in some countries, but the general population were unaware of the origin of the word while the people of the specific ethnicity or culture continued to be offended every time the word was used.

In a non-Islamic country, when someone of the Islamic origin is arrested and reported in a newspaper, reference to the Islamic origin of the person, even if it is completely irrelevant to the crime committed, is a usual trend today. But when someone of non-Islamic origin such as a Christian has committed the same crime and reported, the Christian origin is never referred in such an article in the same newspaper. This can apply vice-versa in countries of different religious or cultural origins.

Recollecting the process of the Durban World Conference against Racism (WCAR) 2001, he mentioned the significance of efforts made by civil society. Although the NGO Forum final document was not officially adopted due to controversies over specific issues, he stressed that the discussion on and recognition of the role of HRE in combating racism and discrimination were a progress made at the NGO Forum of WCAR and the draft final document of the NGO Forum, which could be easily found by internet search even today, had included a large number of paragraphs on HRE as an essential approach to those issues.

**Dr. Kanyana Mutombo, Director, African Popular University**

Mutombo, also the Chief Editor of Regards Africains and Secretary General of CRAN – Carrefour de réflexion et d'action contre le racism anti-Noir en Suisse, spoke of his experience and views from the ground. He challenged the added value of documents, questioning whether or not they were implemented in practical terms. In his view, documents agreed upon by the international community do not necessarily help to fight racism and any other form of intolerance at local levels but rather one has to build anti-racism projects on the basis of the local values existing in African societies since centuries. He also expressed his views that human rights education (HRE) was abused in the African context in order to serve the interest of

colonialism, foreign powers and foreign economic interests. HRE based on African values and philosophy is intrinsically linked to non-discrimination and respect for the human rights and dignity of each person.

On this basis, from 2005 onwards he has been involved in training to reconstruct African and Rwandan identity for Rwandan youth. The training is currently developed together with a local NGO, Inteko Izirikana (Committee of wise men) and other local resources. This capacity building project consists in conducting a training of trainers in 30 primary and secondary schools of Rwanda. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education as well as some foreign sponsors have contributed to the project. The UNESCO National Commissions in Rwanda and in Switzerland are involved in this project as well.

The training takes into account the local values shared by all Rwandese and the universal African concept of 'Ubuntu' which are both embedded in Rwandan culture and society. In this way, the project currently conducted in Rwanda is a very concrete approach for educating youth through the reconstruction of an identity fractured by the genocide. The training focuses on the common heritage of all communities in Rwanda and builds unity among them, contributing to peace-building efforts. It concretely provides participants with tools to evaluate and identify African and Rwandese values so as to place them in the centre of courses and school curricula, especially concerning history and civic education courses, as well as through special workshops. In the pilot schools, students reacted massively, spontaneously and enthusiastically by creating "African and Rwandan Identity Clubs".

The training is an important contribution to build a new confidence and pride to promote a common belonging to local, African and universal common values. Its impact has been wide-ranging: A pedagogical kit for African and Rwandan identity-based activities and a training manual have been developed. In neighbouring countries, such as DR Congo, the authorities have also been interested to learn about the project and the first visit to Goma took place in May 2008. Other countries (i.e. Burundi) in the region have since gone on to express interest.

Mutombo concluded his presentation in stressing that HRE to combat racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance must be understood as rooted within local culture and must start from there, not being imposed from outside by international documents and experts.

**Mr. Daniel Soley-Gutiérrez, National Human Rights Institution of Costa Rica**

Soley-Gutiérrez highlighted the need to look at the causes of discrimination and racism which often are rooted in feelings. He added that fear often led one to attack others different from oneself. Such fear and its manifestations need to be analysed and he continued to state that it must be possible to transform hatred to positive human values through education.

In the context of people's awareness of national policies and of building a peaceful society prioritising education, he mentioned the significance of Costa Rica as a country without a military since 1948. Possessing military, he said, could usually be a cause of oppression upon people rather than defending them and their territory. In the meantime, education systems in many countries suffer from budgetary difficulties.

In the case of Costa Rica education was prioritised in the context of national budgetary policies over military expenditures. This made a big difference in the lives of people. The average life expectancy of 58 years in 1950 has been improved to 78 or 79 years today. 97% of children are enrolled in compulsory education. However, keeping up with this rate of education is still a challenge at the high school level. The main reason for the discontinuation of education beyond high school is still poverty.

Regarding the work of the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) of Costa Rica, he emphasised that the existence of such human rights mechanisms alone was not sufficient and that education was the key.

Non-formal and informal education outside school is also very important to complement the formal educational system. The role of the NHRI of Costa Rica since its creation 13 years ago has been protecting human rights, defending victims of human rights violations and disseminating information on human rights. He said education plays an important role in order to overcome the ignorance that people might have towards building a democratic and peaceful society based on mutual understanding and in harmony of differences.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL 10TH SESSION (2-27 March, 2009)**

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### **1. Substantive Session**

During the substantive session at the plenary of the Council, several statements of States and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) focused particularly on human rights education (HRE).

Under Agenda Item 5 - Human rights bodies and mechanisms, the statement of the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training in the Council - an informal group consisting of the governments of Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco and Switzerland, presented by Switzerland on their behalf, indicated a number of HRE activities at the centre of the UN system and also made reference to the International Conference on Human Rights - 15 years after the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna at the end of August, 2008 at which HRE was one of the focused areas. The statement also included their appreciation for the NGOs' efforts for HRE, referring to the NGO panels (of the Series) held in parallel with the 10th session of the Council, as well as NGOs' contributions in the processes of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) and drafting the UN declaration on human rights education and training. In this statement, organising a seminar in Geneva, before August 2009, was also informed as part of the drafting process of the UN declaration on human rights education and training (mentioned below under "*Resolution on the United Nations declaration*").

Morocco also expressed its will to join the organisation of the mentioned seminar, following the statement of the Platform. It expressed the view that the draft declaration should contribute to the full enjoyment of all human rights through human rights education and training (HRET).

GRULAC (the group of Latin American and the Caribbean States), in the statement presented by Chile on their behalf, stressed on HRE as essential for the realisation of all fundamental rights and freedoms, the prevention of conflicts and violation of human rights, as well as the promotion of equality, culture of peace and participation in democratic processes. It also urged the Member States to inform the Council, in the Universal Periodic Review process, of any progress made on HRET. In addition it urged States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and civil society to contribute and cooperate with the Council in promoting measures and concrete actions for developing HRE, and for establishing the second phase of the WPHRE.

The Irish Human Rights Commission, in its statement, followed up its response to the questionnaire addressed to NHRIs by the Council's Advisory Committee (CAC) at the end of 2008 on the draft UN declaration on human rights education and training. It stressed the elements it believed essential for inclusion in the draft declaration: the important role of NHRIs in this area; the parameters of the subject in relation to other forms of value education such as citizenship education, education for sustainable development, etc.; the expected distinctive value of an explicit human rights element in various forms of education; reference to the need for consistent, systematised and sustained national policies for HRE and for mechanisms to ensure provision of HRE as compliant with the international legal obligations of States; emphasis on the centrality of teachers and educators to the HRE project with reference to the importance of their levels of knowledge about and attitude towards human rights; delineating HRE in relation to other areas of training and education beyond the formal and non-formal sectors in preparation for future phases of the WPHRE; the need for HRET not only in the formal sector but also in the non-formal sector and in the continuing professional training of teachers, the judiciary, legal professionals, the public sector and the wider corporate sector; and promotion of the prioritisation of resources at national level for HRE.

Under Agenda Item 8 - Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the European Group of NHRIs made a statement focusing on HRET and the role of NHRIs, on behalf of 20 European NHRIs in Status A.<sup>1</sup> It stressed that education in and for human rights was an integral part of the right to education and was a critical element in the promotion and protection of human rights. It indicated that in addition to the legal obligations to provide HRE enshrined in various binding international

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Georgia, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Northern Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, and Norway.

instruments, the UN framework for HRE such as the UN Decade for HRE and the subsequent UN WPHRE had produced a variety of standard-setting documents relating to national practice in HRE, setting out programmes for implementation of these obligations and providing general guidelines to assist in the measure. The European Group of NHRIs also described a human rights-based approach to education as contributing to the achievement of quality education, promoting respect for diversity and non-discrimination in all its forms, and able to improve standards of living for all. On the role of NHRIs, it expressed the view that NHRIs were ideally placed to assist States in the implementation of national action plans for HRE, expecting the increasing engagement and recognition of this role of NHRIs in this area.

Several other Member States also referred to HRE in their statements.

## 2. Human Rights Council Resolutions

The following two resolutions are notably focusing on human rights education.

### ***Resolution on the World Programme for Human Rights Education***<sup>2</sup>

More than 54 UN Member States cosponsored this resolution that was adopted by consensus of the Council's Member States on 25 March.

Under Agenda Item 3, the draft of this resolution was introduced by Costa Rica on behalf of the Platform of the four governments mentioned above. In the introductory statement, Costa Rica expressed the view of the Platform that the support and promotion provided by States, NHRIs, the UN agencies and NGOs were essential both now and in the future.

This is a procedural resolution that clarifies the concluding process of the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) and preparation for its second phase.

The Council has requested the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to consult with UN Member States, NHRIs and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations to determine the parameters of the second phase of the WPHRE to begin on 1 January 2010, and to submit a report on those consultations to the twelfth session of the Council (September 2009). The modalities of this process are yet unclear and expected to be facilitated by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The Council also encouraged Member States to start taking steps for the preparation of their national evaluation reports on the first phase, with the assistance of international and regional organisations, as well as civil society actors, to be provided to the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System in early 2010.

The national evaluation reports on the first phase of the WPHRE are vital as the first evaluation process of the WPHRE and also for the effective shifting to the second phase. It is important to keep in mind that the conclusion of each phase does not mean the end of the implementation of HRE in the focused area but simply the shift of the focus to another area. At the consultation meeting on the contents of this resolution held prior to its adoption and separately from the plenary of the Council, a request made by the Chair of the NGO WG on HREL was accepted and the phrase "as well as civil society actors" was inserted in operative paragraph 3 of the final text which reads:

The Human Rights Council "*Encourages* United Nations Member States to start taking steps for the preparation of their national evaluation reports on the first phase, with the assistance of international and regional organizations, as well as civil society actors, to be provided to the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System in early 2010."

While the preparation of the national evaluation report on the first phase of the WPHRE is primarily and principally the responsibility of the respective Member State, contribution by relevant civil society actors is considered highly important in the concluding process of the first phase.

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<sup>2</sup> Draft resolution number: A/HRC/10/L.17. The resolution will be officially numbered by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and be available on the website of the Human Rights Council 10th session later.  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/10session/resolutions.htm>

### ***Resolution on the United Nations declaration on human rights education and training***<sup>3</sup>

A total of 77 UN Member States cosponsored this resolution that was adopted by consensus of the Council's Member States on 27 March.

Under Agenda Item 5, the draft of this resolution was introduced by Morocco on behalf of the Platform of the four governments mentioned above.

While this is also considered as a procedural resolution that clarifies the drafting process of the declaration, there are two noteworthy elements.

One is a seminar expected to be organised in Geneva stated in operative paragraph 2 which reads:

The Human Rights Council "*Welcomes* the initiative of the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training to organize a seminar, with the participation of experts and specialists and the assistance and expertise of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and all interested parties, in order to further the reflection on elements to be included in the draft declaration."

This was the response of the Council to the recommendation on holding a seminar contained in the progress report<sup>4</sup> on the drafting process submitted by the CAC to the Council. The seminar is expected to be held before the next session in August 2009 of the CAC. The details are yet to be determined. All stakeholders need to closely follow any further development on the plan of this seminar.

The other element is concerned with the timeframe of the drafting process. The council requested the Advisory Committee to submit the draft declaration on human rights education and training to the Council for consideration at the Council's next main session in March 2010.

At the consultation meeting on the contents of this resolution held prior to its adoption, it was made clear by the Member States sponsored the resolution that the draft to be submitted would be subject to the debate by the Council, and it would not necessarily be the final version of the draft. In this regard, the mentioned seminar would also be a critical cornerstone in the whole drafting process.

### **3. NGO Initiative**

The written joint statement with 365 signatories was followed up by two joint oral statements of NGOs presented at the plenary of the Council on 23 March under Agenda Item 5 - one on the WPHRE in the name of 12 organisations and the other on the draft UN declaration on human rights education and training in the name of 9 organisations, both of which referred to the written statement.

Combined with these joint NGO statements, the Series of NGO Panels drew the attention of many attendants at the Human Rights Council 10th session to the efforts and contribution of civil society actors in the promotion and implementation of HRE with a particular emphasis on the importance of incorporating the views and suggestions of civil society actors in the process of global policy-making on HRE.

Through the presentations and discussions of each Panel, too, it is evident that HRE is a sustainable approach to various human rights issues.

The NGO panels confirmed this fact, and the actions of the whole NGO initiative verified the critical role of civil society actors in formulation of the global policy framework such as the draft UN declaration on human rights education and training and the WPHRE. Both at the international and national levels, it is vital that civil society actors proactively involve themselves in and contribute to the concluding process of the first phase of the WPHRE, determination of the parameters of the second phase, as well as the drafting process of the UN declaration for effective implementation of HRE in all countries.

*The NGO WG on HREL* wishes that this report will be a useful tool to as many relevant actors as possible for the purpose of better strategy-building.

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<sup>3</sup> Draft resolution number: A/HRC/10/L.16. *Cf.*, n.2.

<sup>4</sup> A/HRC/AC/2/L.8 (3 February 2009), p.6, para.19.

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/advisorycommittee/session2/documentation.htm>

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