

58th Session of the Commission on Human Rights

Agenda item 17 : Promotion and protection of human rights, Sub-item (c) : Information and education, United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)

NGO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

In order to further the efforts of Member States of the United Nations, as well as to strengthen the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to support the activities of non-governmental organizations and other actors in civil society with regard to human rights education, the following recommendations are respectfully put forth by members of the Global Human Rights Education listserv network. We urge inclusion of the language of this statement in a resolution of the Commission on Human Rights.

This recommendation was discussed and agreed upon in April 2002 by members of the network sponsored by Human Rights Education Associates (HREA). The 121 signatories to the following recommendations collectively represent 98 NGOs from 51 countries representing every major region. Ten of these NGOs have consultative status.

A full list of signatories is attached.

We, the undersigned, recognizing the importance of the activities being undertaken under the existing UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) and emphasizing the urgent need to meet the goals set out by the Decade, urge the Commission on Human Rights to adopt a resolution on the following:

(1) Appointment of a Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Education with the mandate:

- To report on the status, throughout the world, of the realization of the right to human rights education and the difficulties encountered in the implementation of this right, taking into account information and comments received from Governments, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as non governmental organizations;
- To monitor country progress and to make recommendations for the implementation of the goals set in the High Commissioner's report on the mid-term evaluation of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, annexed to the resolution 2001/61 of the Commission on Human Rights, 57th session;
- To promote, as appropriate, assistance to Governments in working out and adopting urgent plans of action, wherever they do not exist;

- To explore the central and transverse nature of human rights education, reaffirming its empowerment dimension with regard to the promotion and implementation of all human rights: civil, political, economic, social and cultural, including the right to development;
- To report on educational efforts to promote and strengthen gender equality, particularly with regard to women empowerment;
- To evaluate the cross-sectorial impact of human rights education on priorities set in the mid-term report, also including human development and poverty eradication, the prevention of all forms of discrimination and intolerance as described by international human rights standards and instruments, the prevention of terrorism, as well as inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue as a means to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts;
- To develop a regular dialogue and discuss possible areas of collaboration with relevant United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and international organizations in the field of human rights education, inter alia the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, and with international financial institutions, such as the World Bank;
- To ensure coordination and complementarity with the work carried out by the special rapporteur on the right to education;
- To submit to the Commission on Human Rights, beginning at its fifty-ninth session, a report covering the activities relating to this mandate.

(2) The creation of a voluntary fund for human rights education to be administered by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights through the program of advisory services and technical assistance as requested in the Decade Plan of Action (paragraph 51) and reiterated in 2002 in General Assembly resolution A/res/56/167 (operative paragraph 22). The fund shall be used to support activities under the Decade, including support for building human rights education capacities in governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations at the national, regional and international levels.

(3) The convening of inter-sessional workshops aimed at better defining priorities and setting the agenda and action plan for the remaining years of the Decade and in particular :

- Developing criteria for best practice models in the area of human rights education in all sectors and at all levels of the educational system, identifying appropriate measures to assess their impact at national and regional levels, and disseminating this information through UN channels;
- Establishing clear strategies to develop human rights education expertise and capacities at the national, regional and international levels, in collaboration with Unesco, in particular Unesco Chairs in Human Rights, the associated schools network and the International Bureau of Education, as well as national and regional educational agencies and NGOs active in the field;

- Exploring strategies to further mainstream "the human rights approach to development" into intergovernmental organizations, development agencies, financial institutions and the private sector, recognizing the mutually reinforcing aspects of human rights education and development strategies, particularly with regard to the implementation of empowerment and poverty eradication strategies;
- Strengthening efforts to combat racism and all forms of discrimination and intolerance as described by agreed international human rights standards and instruments, building upon the conclusions of the World Conference Against Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance with regard to the right to education and human rights education;
- Give proper consideration to the mutually reinforcing aspects of human rights education and inter-religious dialogue in promoting religious tolerance and the right to freedom of religion and belief as well as all other human rights.

(4) Finally, the Commission on Human Rights should request that the Human Rights Treaty Bodies formulate recommendations with regard to human rights education, and invite States Parties to report on progress made in the area. Special Rapporteurs and independent experts should also be encouraged to make recommendations in relation to their specific mandates.

To facilitate this task, the Commission on Human Rights should request the inclusion of human rights education as an item for the agenda of all treaty bodies for the remainder of the Decade. The commission should also request the convening of a special meeting of the chairpersons and the rapporteurs to identify positive actions undertaken by these bodies and to discuss how to better use these mechanisms to further implement the right to human rights education.

The Commission on Human Rights should also request that an "expert" workshop be organized on the issue of the conclusion of the current Decade of Human Rights Education and its follow-up.

The signatories to this resolution believe it is essential that clear priorities be set and immediate action be taken in order for the UN Decade for Human Rights Education to result in concrete measures undertaken by States and other global actors.

Put forth by Human Rights Education Associates (HREA), International Organisation for the Development of Freedom of Education, Pax Romana, Soka Gakkai International, and Summer University on Human Rights, and endorsed by the following organizations and human rights educators:

INTERNATIONAL NGOs

Amnesty International – International Secretariat, United Kingdom
 Canadian Human Rights Foundation, Canada
 Commonwealth Legal Education Association, United Kingdom
 International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), United Kingdom

International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), Japan and Sri Lanka
International Helsinki Federation, Austria
People's Movement for Human Rights Education, USA
University of Minnesota Human Rights Center, USA

REGIONAL NGOs

Arab Institute for Human Rights, Tunisia
Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong
Asian Regional Resource Centre for Human Rights Education, Thailand
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Egypt
European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and WUS, Austria
Hurights-Osaka, Japan
ILGA-Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia and Pacific Islands Region
University Human Rights Centers Network in Southeastern Europe

AFRICA/MIDDLE EAST

Amnesty International-South Africa and Transed, South Africa
Association for the Protection of Women's and Children's Rights in Cameroon
Centre for Environmental and Political Education, Nigeria
Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, South Africa
Kenyan Human Rights Commission, Kenya
Kwasi Ohene Dwumfour, Ghana
L'association Marocaine des Enseignants de Disciplines Sociales, Morocco
Network Movement for Justice and Development, Sierra Leone
Network for Youth Advancement and Peace Foundation, Ghana
S.R.C., Ghana School of Law, Ghana
Tomorrow Children, Benin
Women Political Action Committee, Nigeria

AMERICAS

Accion pro Educacion en Derechos Humanos, Mexico
Associação Comunitária Monte Azul, Brazil
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, Canada
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, USA
Hesperian Foundation, USA
Human Strategies for Human Rights, USA
INSGENAR, Argentina
Instituto de Defensa Legal, Peru
International Association for the Advancement of Human Welfare, USA
IPEDEHP, Peru
National Center for Human Rights Education, USA
Privaterra, Canada
Resource Center of the Americas, USA

Scholars at Risk Network, USA
The Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence: Peace Division of the American Psychological Association, USA
Tahirih Justice Center, USA
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, USA
Urban Justice Center, USA

ASIA-PACIFIC

Amnesty International - Mongolia
Awami Committee for Development, Pakistan
Australian Bisexual Network, Australia
Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute (BLHRRI), Japan
Center for Peace, Gender, Human Rights Education, Normal University, Philippines
Human Rights Education Cell, Centre of Concern for Child Labour (New Delhi) India
Indigenous People's Center for Policy and Human Rights (North East), India
Justice and Peace Commission (Mumbai) India
Mongolian Women Lawyer's Association
National Committee on Human Rights Education Inc., Australia
Office of Human Rights Studies and Social Development, Mahidol University, Thailand
Osaka City University, Research Center for Human Rights, Japan
People's Watch – Tamilnadu, India
Rural Initiatives in Sustainability and Empowerment, Pakistan
Women's Legal Bureau, Inc., Philippines
Youth Organization of Bhutan, Nepal

EUROPE

ACCEPT, Romania
Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, Yugoslavia
Centre for Direct Protection of Human Rights, Croatia
C.E.U. – Centre for Human Evolution Studies, Italy
Chair for Human Rights Education, Comenius University, Slovakia
Charter88, United Kingdom
Focal Point Skopje – University of Skopje, Macedonia
History Foundation, Turkey
The Human Rights Centre Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
The Human Rights Centre of the University of Banjaluka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
The Human Rights Centre of the University of Podgorica, Montenegro
The Human Rights Centre of the University of Pristina, Albania
The Human Rights Centre of the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Human Rights Centre Zagreb, Croatia
Human Rights Educational Centre, Belarus
The Independent Society for Education and Human Rights (SIEDO), Moldova
Initiative for Freedom of Expression, Turkey
Ius Primi Viri, Italy
Jaan Toñisson Institute, Estonia
The Leo Kuper Foundation, United Kingdom

Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, Austria
Menschenrechte Schweiz MERS, Switzerland
Nadacia Obcan a Demokracia (Minority Rights Group), Slovakia
National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO), The Netherlands
Organisation Supporting the Integration of Minorities (OSIM), Czech Republic
Slovak Helsinki Committee, Slovakia
Stichting “Thirdway”, The Netherlands
Studio-Mobile - Accent on Action, Georgia
United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Kingdom
Vlaamse Organisatie voor Mensenrechteneducatie, Belgium
Women's Information Consultative Center, Ukraine
World University Service – Geman Kommittee, Germany

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