



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working Session 8 – Human Rights Education Warsaw, 2 October 2009

OHCHR STATEMENT ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Part of the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is to coordinate relevant United Nations education and public information programmes in the field of human rights (as per United Nations [General Assembly resolution 48/141](#) of 7 January 1994).

1. World Programme for Human Rights Education

On the global level, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) coordinates the [World Programme for Human Rights Education](#) (WPHRE), an open-ended initiative launched by United Nations General Assembly in December 2004. Its first phase, 2005-2009, has been devoted to integrating human rights education in school systems. Through the United Nations General Assembly, all Member States adopted the [Plan of Action](#) for the first phase of the WPHRE that provides broad guidance on national implementation. In this regard, the primary implementation responsibility rests with Ministries of Education or equivalent institutions. Our [website](#) provides summaries of [national initiatives](#) including National Human Rights Plans of Action and Human Rights Education Plans, as submitted to OHCHR by Member States. The first phase of the WPHRE concludes in December 2009.

2. Consultation and Human Rights Council Resolution on the WPHRE Second Phase

In March 2009, the Human Rights Council, through [resolution 10/3](#), requested OHCHR to consult with Member States and other stakeholders on a possible focus for the second phase of the WPHRE, to be launched in January 2010. In the course of the summer months of 2009, OHCHR carried out a broad based [consultation](#) on this subject and the views of the 59 respondents are summarized in the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/12/36](#)). Amongst received responses, numerous stakeholders pointed to the need for continuing the focus on the inclusion of human rights education in primary and secondary schools and to focus human rights education on higher education, civil servants and other duty bearers including the police, teachers and educators.

At its 12th session, the Human Rights Council adopted [resolution 12/4](#) concerning the WPHRE, which mandated that the second phase of this global initiative will span 5 years, as from January 2010, and will focus “on human rights education for higher education and on human rights training programmes for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel at all levels”. To this end, OHCHR was

requested to develop a plan of action for the second phase, in cooperation with relevant intergovernmental organizations, in particular UNESCO.

Human Rights Council resolution 12/4 also requested the [United Nations Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee for Human Rights Education in the School System](#) to carry out an evaluation of the implementation of the first phase of the WPHRE, on the basis of national reports. This work will be undertaken during the first half of 2010 and all UN Member States will be invited to provide submissions to OHCHR in its capacity as Secretariat of the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee.

3. Draft United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training

OHCHR has also been supporting the work of the [Human Rights Council Advisory Committee](#) that has been tasked with preparing a draft United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. In this regard, the Advisory Committee drafting group, through the engagement of a consultative process, has developed a preliminary draft that can be consulted on the OHCHR website. The Advisory Committee will further refine the text of the draft Declaration at its 4th session in January 2010 and it will then be presented to all Member States at the Human Rights Council's 13th session of March 2010.

4. Related OHCHR Activities

Other OHCHR activities related to human rights education and the WPHRE include:

- a. Supporting national and local capacities for human rights education in the context of its [Assisting Communities Together Project](#) (ACT), which provides financial assistance to grass-roots initiatives; to date, 669 NGOs in 79 countries and territories have participated, including several from the OSCE region;¹
- b. Developing resource tools such as an online [Database on Human Rights Education and Training](#), a Geneva-based [Resource Collection on Human Rights Education and Training](#) and a web section on the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#); and
- c. Developing a variety of human rights education and training materials, guides and professional training handbooks, also available on the [OHCHR website](#).

5. Compendium of good practice

A joint publication, developed by four partner organizations – OHCHR, OSCE/ODIHR, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and the subject of today's [launch](#), is entitled "[Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice](#)". This publication is the product of joint inter-organizational efforts sharing the common goal of advancing human rights education and training. On this occasion, OHCHR would like to thank its partners for their expertise, enthusiasm and excellent cooperation.

¹ The ACT Project operates in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme that has provided funds for additional activities within in this framework.

The Compendium of Good Practice shares creative approaches to human rights education in different regions of the world and constitutes a joint contribution by the four partner organizations to the WPHRE. OHCHR is optimistic that the Compendium will be a useful tool for sharing information on human rights education initiatives and a source of inspiration for education professionals throughout the globe.

Thank you.