

DELEGATION OF TURKEY

4 September 2003

CONFERENCE ON RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION (Vienna, 4-5 September 2003)

Session 3: Education

Speaking Points

Intolerance is not a spontaneous fact in the life of an individual or in society. It is a behavioural pattern acquired in time. So is tolerance. Addressing, in a systematic and rational manner, cultural, social, economic and political root causes of intolerance is therefore a necessity. A culture of tolerance, on the other hand, can be attained notably through education, which could make a decisive contribution to the promotion of human rights values and particularly of attitudes and behaviours.

Unfortunately, segregation in schooling and racist as well as discriminatory contents in some study programs, in school texts and in information media are still a fact of life in many of our countries.

Equal access to quality education for children from every background is crucial. Particular attention should be paid to eliminating all direct and indirect discrimination in education systems against individuals from vulnerable sectors of the society, including girls and women. Specific measures should be taken to ensure that they achieve their full potential.

Equally important is the application of education policies designed to promote understanding, solidarity and tolerance among individuals, as well as among ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations. These policies should duly be reflected in school curricula, textbooks and other educational material including the use of new technologies, as well as in the regular training programs for teachers and other educational staff.

Exchanges of educational practices and research, direct contacts between students, teachers and researchers, school twinning arrangements and visits at national and international levels are useful experiences in increasing knowledge of, and tolerance and respect for, foreign cultures, peoples and countries.

Finally, ethical education of human rights will be a most effective way to combat racism and discrimination, especially in preventing younger generation from acquiring racist tendencies.

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ENGLISH only

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Recommendations

- Participating States should review school curricula, textbooks and teaching methods at all levels with a view to eliminating prejudices, negative stereotyping and racist and discriminatory elements.
- Participating States should include in their educational curricula and social programs at all levels, as appropriate, knowledge of, and tolerance and respect for, foreign cultures, peoples and countries.
- Human rights education should be part of school curricula starting from early stages of education.
- Ethical education of human rights should be used as an effective tool to combat racism and discrimination, especially in preventing younger generation from acquiring racist tendencies.
- Human rights education should not be confined to children, but should also address adult members of the society. Targeted education programs should be regularly undertaken for politicians, teachers, media and civil society representatives, law enforcement officers, judges, prosecutors, prison staff, customs and immigration officers, health and social welfare services personnel and other officials.
- Participating States should take all appropriate measures to eliminate obstacles limiting the access of children to education.
- Participating States should ensure safe school environments, free from violence and harassment motivated by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or related intolerance.