

Subject: TESPRDD/METS/EI/IA Your letter dated 1 May 2023 regarding consultations on the fifth phase of the World Programme on Human Rights Education

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

Referring to your letter dated 1 May 2023, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (hereinafter the 'Institute'), is pleased to share with you the following suggestions for the fifth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

As target sector, the Institute would like to recommend politicians, including national and local government, members of parliament, and members of regional and local councils.

Firstly, in the Netherlands, the Institute notices a lack of knowledge, skills and attitude to consider the state party obligations of international human rights law in law and policymaking, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. In practice, references are usually only made to the Constitution and national (non-discrimination) laws. At the same time the Netherlands does not have a Constitutional Court nor the possibility of a constitutional review of national laws by the judiciary. Equally, the Institute observes a lack of knowledge of international human rights infrastructure and limited attention to the concluding observations on state party reporting from the Netherlands among its National Parliament.

Secondly, recent political developments, ranging from a scandal around childcare subsidies to corona laws and measures, demonstrate a lack of understanding of human rights principles, including good governance and the right to effective remedy, which have led to questionable decisions and undue suffering.

Thirdly, with the focus on the education sector in previous phases of the World Programme, and an emphasis on civic education, human rights education and the rule of law in primary and secondary education in the Netherlands, it is critical that those responsible for respecting and protecting human rights and the rule of law have a solid understanding themselves of their importance and their own obligations as duty-bearers.

Lastly, in the context of continued globalisation, regional cooperation (cf. EU, AU, SADC, ASEAN), international trade agreements (cf. TTIP, CETA and the FFTA), Sustainable Development Goals as well as the rise of transnational problems (e.g. climate change, pollution, cybercrime), international cooperation for the respect, protection and realisation of human rights in all countries is key. At the same time and contrary to international commitments, high income countries and those in the global north have continuously diminished their spending on international cooperation as a proportion of their GDP.

Thus, in terms of focus area, the Institute believes the fifth phase of the World Programme should focus on the meaning of duty, duty-bearers and state party obligations in the context of the protection, realisation and promotion of human rights at local, national and international levels. It should also include how politicians can and ought to use general comments, concluding observations and international case law in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of laws, policies and programmes.

Yours sincerely,