

CEDAW 58TH SESSION

HALF DAY GENERAL DISCUSSION ON GIRLS'/WOMEN'S RIGHT TO EDUCATION,
ROOM XVI, PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA, 7 JULY 2014

Madame Chair, and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Thank you for organizing this half-day General Discussion and for giving the opportunity to NGOs to contribute to elaborating a **"General Recommendation on girls'/women's right to education"**.

HRE 2020 welcomes this initiative and is strongly committed to your aim of ensuring that States parties to CEDAW fully comply with their obligations under article 10 to respect, protect and fulfil the right of women and girls to education.

HRE 2020 is a recently formed global coalition of civil society organizations that aims to promote human rights education by supporting and strengthening the implementation of existing international standards and commitments, and holding governments accountable for their human rights education obligations. The **UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training** affirms that, *"everyone has the right to know, seek and receive information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms and should have access to human rights education"*¹.

Human rights education is a key component of the right to education, in particular 'quality education', and reflects a rights-based approach to education. If rights-based, education can be a means to attain gender equality.² In the words of the then UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomasevski, rights-based education is a passkey for full and equal enjoyment of all human rights.

In **rights-based education**, human rights principles of equality, dignity, inclusion, accountability, participation, empowerment, and non-discrimination are integrated into all aspects of education. These principles are integrated into the learning environment, the teaching/ learning process, the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, as well as education policy. **Human rights education contributes to preventing the violation and abuse of the human rights of women and girls, and to combating and eradicating all forms of discrimination, racism, stereotyping and incitement to hatred, and the harmful attitudes and prejudices that underlie them.**³

HRE 2020 calls for integrating reference to the right to human rights education of women and girls into the General Recommendation. This will help to:

- shift equal rights of women and girls from the margins to the core of education strategies,
- mainstream gender equality into educational content,
- translate human rights into educational strategy and practice, and
- move beyond equal access to education and equality in education, to education for equality.

¹ United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, General Assembly Resolution 66/137, 19 December 2011, Article 1.

² Katarina Tomasevski, Human Rights and Poverty Reduction, Girls' education through a human rights lens: What can be done differently, what can be made better, February 2005.

³ United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, General Assembly Resolution 66/137, 19 December 2011, Article 4.