**Information Note for the Questionnaire of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, on the Cultural Dimension of the Right to Education**

*“4. Please specify the specific and particular difficulties encountered in ensuring an inclusive and quality education that allows cultural diversity and the cultural rights of each person to flourish at the same time*.”

Globally, the trend which has presented itself shows a shift within societies towards a multicultural composition (i.e. in terms of nationality, ethnicity, belief or language) in the meantime, states have shown that they are unable to structurally match up to the societal change, even more they have shown a tendency for stronger centralisation. This situation presents itself as a barrier to ensuring the inclusion of cultural diversity within education.

On the other hand, nowadays, the uprising trends of nationalism, xenophobia and racism receive a certain level of tolerance by states across the globe and in certain cases are even being used by ruling parties to strengthen their position. States tend to prioritise protecting their education systems and also keeping them centralised. In many countries, education systems are tools which are modified and implemented in order to ensure the continuity of a state’s official ideology through reproducing it. States should focus on providing widespread education services which are inclusive to different social and cultural groups - one that also prevents the reproduction of cultural hatred - as well as the kind of education which ensures peaceful coexistence of different populations to co-exist in peace and cultivating personal development.

States tend to consider the schooling rates within their territories as a fundamental indicator with respect to the implementation of the right to education rather than aiming for an education system which composes of elements such as respect for dignity, cultural diversity, a focus on coexisting in peace, best interests of the child and the rights of the parents.

*“5. Have specific mechanisms been established to consult and ensure the participation of stakeholders, in particular the populations concerned and parents, for a better understanding and effectiveness of the right to education, including its cultural dimension? What place is given in this context to the voice of children?”*

In Turkey, none of the minorities - including ethnic and religious minorities - are recognised other than those specified in the Lausanne Convention, therefore the rights of such minorities are not guaranteed within the scope of the right to education. Central authority designates and oversees matters such as education services.

The right of the child to participate in the public sphere is generally perceived as the right of the parents which results in children’s voices being dismissed. Furthermore, an accessible mechanism for parents or different cultural, language, social groups or for members of disadvantaged groups (i.e. persons with disabilities, Roma, girls) does not exist in Turkey. Local authority which is elected by the public also has no say about the education system.

The curricula used within the public education system as well as the textbooks and other relevant material is designed and produced by the public authorities in a manner which does not permit the participation of different groups or children themselves. Central authority is also the sole decision maker on matters such as the training on new and current teachers as well as budgeting which have significant effect on the right to education.

On the other hand, the “common values” which are taught within the education system in general does not permit the participation of different groups, neither does it take into consideration the cultural heritage of various groups in Turkey.

*“6. What recommendations should be provided to States and other stakeholders on these issues?”*

* States should establish an accessible and independent mechanism for the participation of different groups including children, in order to set out a set of common values to be taught within the education system.
* States should encourage localisation in all matters, except for the fundamental principles in education, furthermore they should ensure the realisation of the right to establish educational institutions for local groups,
* Each States should establish a monitoring mechanism in accordance with international standards to monitor the implementation of the right to education,
* A mechanism to monitor the right to education in a systematic and continuous matter should be established within the mandate of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This mechanism should have the mandate to request yearly reports from the national human rights institutions of each state party.