



Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Department for International Law, Human Rights  
and Treaty Law

Office of the United Nations High  
Commissioner for Human Rights

## Views of possible focus for the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education – Swedish response

### **1. General comments on the World Programme for Human Rights Education and the Human Rights Council resolution 36/12**

Sweden welcomes the continued efforts for the World Programme for Human Rights Education, and its synergies to the 2030 Agenda, by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Sweden takes this opportunity to express its gratitude for the efforts made by the OHCHR in organising this program and addressing important themes in previous phases of the programme.

Quality education for all in general, and specifically human rights education, are prerequisites for broad, inclusive and sustainable development. Education also plays a decisive role in normalization and reconstruction in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Sweden underlines the need for continued work with human rights education. The sustained implementation of the Human Rights Council resolution 36/12 is therefore of significant importance. In this regard, Sweden is proud to have been co-sponsor of the aforementioned resolution.

### **2. Sweden's suggestions for target groups and thematic human rights issues**

- a) Target groups: Women and men, girls and boys in primary and secondary school systems in conflict and post-conflict settings. As well as health care personnel, educators and humanitarian actors.

- b) Thematic focus: Women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights, focusing on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). This proposal relates in particular to Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 5 and 11.

SRHR is a fundamental part of the work to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women and their enjoyment of all human rights. In addition, working with and directed to men and boys is essential for the shared responsibility for and benefit of gender equality, including working with SRHR.

Ill-health related to sexual and reproductive health is one of the most common health problems for girls and women in low and middle-income countries. Despite major efforts, maternal mortality remains relatively high across the globe. Unsafe abortions, birth complications or harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, can often prove fatal. Ensuring sexual and reproductive health is simply essential for human survival.

SRHR covers every person's equal opportunities, rights and possibilities to be able to determine over their own sexuality, bodies and reproduction free from coercion, violence or discrimination. Rape and other forms of sexual violence represent serious breaches of internationally recognized human rights. Unequal power relationships and discrimination make it particularly difficult for girls and women to enjoy these rights. In conflict, post-conflict and crisis situations, infringements of SRHR often increase.

SRHR determine the course of women's and girls' lives, a fact that far too often has been neglected. SRHR constitute a central element in the protection and support that girls and women need in conflict, post-conflict and disaster situations, but also form a vital part of work against HIV and AIDS and other health-related issues.

A majority of young persons lack the knowledge required to make free and responsible decisions about their sexuality and reproduction, leaving them vulnerable to coercion and violence, sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy. CSE enables young persons to protect their health and well-being. Establishing such human rights based education will advance gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights and empowerment of women and girls.

Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), provides extensive bilateral and multilateral support for organisations working to strengthen SRHR, accounted to 1404 million SEK during 2016. Sida has extensive strategies for development cooperation on increasing access to trained staff, and adequate maternity care in conflict and post-conflict situations. Support to SRHR accounts for over 60 percent of Sweden's development cooperation allocated to health. Sweden has long been the largest donor of core funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the second largest donor to UNAIDS.