



Third phase of the World Programme on Education and Training on Human Rights. Ital's remarks and suggestions

to:

registry, wphre

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1 Attachment



italy UN WP on education on HR.doc

Dear Sirs,

please find hereby attached the Italian suggestions for the third phase of the World Programme on Education and Training on Human Rights.

I am pleased to recall below the conclusions of the document:

Italy would like to:

- a) underline the importance of mentioning, among the main stakeholders and actors which plays a crucial role in HRRT: NGOs, also belonging to different sectors, in accordance with a logic of human rights mainstreaming; academia and media (including Internet and social networks);
- b) consider Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) as a key priority of programmes, activities and strategies in HRET;
- c) consider interreligious and intercultural dialogue as a main thematic issue for the World Programme on HRET.

I would like to add that Italy attaches the greatest importance to this programme consistently with its strong commitment to education and training on human rights. At the Human Rights Council, we are member of a devoted platform of countries which promotes the resolution on this matter, while at the last session of the Council we were among the first sponsors of the resolution on education and racism. At the same session High Level Panel on mainstreaming HR, we supported the inclusion of education on HR among the new indicators/goals of the development post-2015 agenda.

For all these reasons, Italy is confident that its suggestions on the third phase of WP on Education and Training on HR can be duly and carefully considered.

Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,



***MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS***  
**General Directorate on Political and Security Affairs**  
**Human Rights Unit**

***Third phase of the UN World Programme on  
Education and Training on Human Rights.***

***Italy's remarks and suggestions***

***Rome, March 2013***

Following to your query (Reference: RRDD/DESIB/METS/FM/EP/OU, OHCHR Communication of February 1<sup>st</sup> 2013), Italy is in a position to make the following remarks and suggestions:

## **1. Introduction**

Human Rights Education and Training (HRET) is one of the most relevant tools for promoting human rights. Only people who know their fundamental rights and freedoms are able to put them fully into practice. HRET contributes to strengthening the respect for human dignity, to building a culture of dialogue and mutual understanding and a more deep and wide accountability of Governments and public Institutions.

Internally and internationally, Italy is seriously engaged in spreading a full awareness and knowledge of human rights with a special focus on new generations.

Domestically Italy is insisting on recognizing a more prominent role to schools, families and the civil society.

At the international level, for over a decade, Italy has worked in order to give a concrete content to the concept of HRET. It is undoubtedly a fundamental right, linked to but at the same time also independent from the right to education. HRET has double aim: not only to promote, but also put into practice human rights in a wide range of educational activities. This right – which belongs to every human being – produces obligations and duties. First of all, Governments must respect, protect and realize the right to education and training on human rights, through specific policies and normative frameworks.

As known, Italy, within a trans-regional coalition, has promoted the first United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. This Declaration, adopted by General Assembly on December 2011, affirms, *inter alia*, that human rights education and training is essential for the promotion of universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in accordance with the principles of universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights.

According to Italy, this Declaration represents a result of the utmost importance: it should be considered as a first step towards an international treaty on this topic.

Furthermore Italy welcomes the GA Resolution n. 66/137, which invites Governments, agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their efforts to disseminate the Declaration and to promote universal respect and understanding thereof, and requests the Secretary-General to include the text of the Declaration in the next edition of "Human Rights: A Compilation of International Instruments".

## **2. Target sectors, specific actions and main stakeholders.**

The promotion of the right of freedom of religion or belief is a sector where targeted educational activities could be particularly beneficial. In fact HRET, promoted by Governments, International Institutions, NGOs and in general the Civil Society, plays a crucial role in the dissemination of mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence worldwide. Italy is firmly convinced that dialogue among different cultures and religions is the condition to assure a full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to guarantee stability and peace in international relations. For this reason we are particularly committed in the field of education to human rights and promotion and protection of freedom of religion as parts of an overall approach aiming at fostering mutual tolerance and respect.

Among the most recent and relevant initiatives promoted by Italy in this context, we can mention the side event "The Civil Society and the Education to Human Rights as a tool for promoting Religious Tolerance" organized by Italy in 2012 in New York during the Ministerial week of the 67<sup>th</sup> UNGA. Ms. Navanethem Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Irina Bokova, the Director General of UNESCO and Mr. Adama Dieng, the UN Secretary General Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect attended the side event as key-note speakers. A wide number of Minister of Foreign Affairs of different Countries and representatives of the Civil Society from different geographical areas also took part to the event in New York. As recognized by all the participants, the event offered a welcome and timely opportunity for discussion, permitting to rethink the interface between education, cultural identity and universal values, and to engage in an in-depth reflection on concrete approaches in that regard.

On February 2013, as a follow-up of the above mentioned side event, Italy organized and hosted at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs an International Workshop devoted to the role of media and academia in "Promoting religious freedom and peaceful coexistence". The workshop was aimed above all at universities, think-tanks and representatives of the world of the media (newspapers, social networks, publishers etc.) in order to tackle the delicate relationship between freedom of expression and interfaith respect, delving into the dynamics which can lead to conflict between religious denominations, and examining communication strategies and human rights education initiatives to be developed for promoting and preserving respect for cultural diversity and multiplicity and peaceful coexistence.

## **3. Conclusions**

Following the previous remarks, replying the OHCHR request and with a view to the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the World Programme on HRET, Italy is pleased:

- a) to underline the importance of mentioning, among the main stakeholders and actors which plays a crucial role in HRRT: NGOs, also belonging to different sectors, in accordance with a logic of human rights mainstreaming; academia and media (including Internet and social networks);
- b) to consider Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) as a key priority of programmes, activities and strategies in HRET;
- c) to consider interreligious and intercultural dialogue as a main thematic issue for the World Programme on HRET.