

**FIRST MEETING OF
THE UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

REPORT

*OHCHR, Geneva
11-12 September 2006*

The first meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (UNIACC) on human rights education in the school system was jointly organized by OHCHR and UNESCO on 11-12 September 2006 at OHCHR Headquarters in Geneva. It gathered representatives from nine UN agencies (ILO, UNAIDS, UNESCO/International Bureau for Education (IBE), UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNRWA) the World Bank and the Council of Europe (observer status). The aims of the meeting were to (a) provide an international framework for cooperation on human rights education in order to encourage and support national implementation of the Plan of Action for the first phase (2005-2007) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE) and (b) clarify the objectives, role and tasks of the UNIACC mandated by the Plan of Action (paras. 38-40).

The Committee adopted its Terms of Reference after making some amendments to the draft text circulated before the meeting. The final version of the Terms of Reference emphasizes the importance for the Committee to ensure that human rights education is adequately reflected in all other United Nations initiatives relevant to human rights/education. With a view to enhancing its working methods, the Committee proposed to collect best practices of other UN inter-agency joint experiences. In addition, the Committee agreed to establish a mechanism for facilitating the exchange of information in-between its meetings.

The Committee explored ways to *encourage and advocate the implementation of the Plan of Action*. It formulated concrete initiatives designed to promote the Plan of Action at the international level, focusing on the use of existing UN institutional mechanisms such as the UN Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures. The Committee also highlighted the key role of UN organizations at the country level in encouraging the development of national implementation strategies. In addition, the UNIACC emphasized the potential of using existing UN frameworks such as the “Action 2” Global Programme, as entry points for further enhancing the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education’s Plan of Action. The Committee underlined the importance of ensuring effective national ownership and sustainability of the Plan of Action. This would involve, for example, providing Member States with a self-evaluation tool for assessing progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action and human rights education in schools at large, and encouraging participatory implementation of the Plan of Action, with full involvement of key national actors, including the government and civil society.

In order to *support and facilitate the implementation of the Plan of Action*, the Committee identified three broad areas where the UNIACC could play an active role, namely, technical assistance, information-sharing and resources mobilization. It emerged that one of the key functions of the UNIACC could be to act as a referral mechanism i.e. to stimulate partnerships and provide guidance regarding requests for funding and technical expertise. The establishment of a mechanism for sharing information on the Plan of Action and the work of the UNIACC, such as a web-based information platform, was also recommended. Furthermore, the Committee discussed how to ensure funding of the UNIACC work in support of national efforts.

While identifying methods for *monitoring the implementation of the Plan of Action*, one proposal was to elaborate an on-line questionnaire to be filled out by Members States. Another suggestion was to explore possibilities to use the UNESCO reporting system.

The UNIACC considered proposals for a *communication strategy* to bring visibility to the UNIACC activities and for developing advocacy tools to raise awareness about human right education in the school system. Recommendations ranged from creating a logo for the first phase of the World Programme to drafting a simple information material on the UNIACC activities and developing a general tool to highlight human rights education opportunities and strategies for the United Nations' country work.

This meeting of the Committee marked a first step in laying the foundation for future work, which will contribute to further encouraging and supporting integration of human rights education in the school system. The UNIACC agreed upon a set of follow-up actions ranging from awareness raising, advocacy, capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation to the development of communication tools.

Annex 1

Human Rights Education in the Primary and Secondary School Systems
1st Phase (2005-2007) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education

UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

11-12 September 2006

*Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Rue des Paquis 52, Geneva
(5th floor meeting room)*

Agenda

Monday 11 September 2006

- 9:45 - 10:15 Opening by OHCHR and UNESCO
Self-introduction by participants
Presentation of the objectives/agenda of the first meeting of the Committee (OHCHR)
- 10:15 - 11:20 Brief presentations: activities of each agency in the area of human rights education in the primary and secondary school systems
- 11:20 - 11:35 *Coffee break*
- 11:35 - 12:45 Presentation of the Plan of Action / Discussion (UNESCO/OHCHR)
- 12:45 - 14:15 *Lunch*
- 14:15 - 15:30 Presentation of the draft Terms of Reference of the Committee/ Discussion (OHCHR)
- 15:30 - 15:45 *Coffee break*
- 15:45 - 17:45 Parallel working groups on the issue:
“*Encouraging and advocating* implementation of human rights education at the national level”
- 17:45 - 18:00 Wrap-up of Day one/Presentation of Day two

Tuesday 12 September 2006

9:45 - 10:45 Reports of working groups in plenary / Discussion

10:45 - 11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00 - 12:45 Parallel working groups on the issue:
“*Supporting* implementation of human rights education at the national level”

12:45 - 14:15 *Lunch*

14:15 - 15:45 Reports of working groups in plenary / Discussion

15:45 - 16:00 *Coffee break*

16:00 - 16:45 Monitoring implementation of the Plan of Action

16:45 - 17:30 Advocacy and communication strategy

17:30 - 18:00 Other issues for discussion
Next steps, including next meeting

**UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

Issues for the working groups

This list of issues is purely indicative in order to facilitate the discussions in the working groups.

How can the UN system/your agency <i>encourage and advocate</i> implementation of human rights education at the national level in line with the WPHRE Plan of Action?
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- 1- How can the UN system/your agency promote a sustained political commitment to human rights education at the national level and ensure that Member States develop an appropriate national implementation strategy (including analysis of the current situation of human rights education in the school system, setting of priorities and development of a national strategy, implementation and monitoring of activities, and evaluation) in line with the WPHRE Plan of Action? How can the UN system/your agency co-operate with other international actors for this purpose?
- 2- How can the UN system/your agency ensure a coordinated and coherent UN approach to encouraging and advocating national implementation? What actions could be integrated into relevant coordinating mechanisms (Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams, etc) or into human rights education programmes?
- 3- How can the UN human rights mechanisms be involved and supported in encouraging the implementation of the Plan of Action?
- 4- How can the UN system/your agency mobilize and involve civil society to encourage national implementation?
- 5- By what other means can the UN system/your agency encourage and advocate national implementation?
- 6- Define the roles and responsibilities for the proposed actions and provide a tentative timeframe.

How can the UN system/your agency *support* implementation of human rights education at the national level in line with the WPHRE Plan of Action?

- 1- How can the UN system/your agency ensure a coordinated and coherent UN approach to supporting national implementation? How can the UN system/your agency share information on relevant programmes and plans in order to maximize resources, avoid duplication and ensure coherence?
- 2- What technical assistance and expert advice to the Ministries of Education can the UN system/your agency provide?
- 3- How can the UN system/your agency support the dissemination of good practices, human rights education materials, as well as information regarding institutions and programmes dealing with human rights education in the school system?
- 4- How can the UN system/your agency interact with international and regional financial institutions, as well as bilateral funding agencies, to explore ways of linking their funding programmes on education to human rights education programmes?
- 5- How can the UN system/your agency support existing human rights education networks and promote the establishment of new ones?
- 6- How can the UN system/your agency support human rights training for teachers, teachers' associations, education officials and employees of non-governmental organizations?
- 7- By what other means can the UN system/your agency support the national implementation?
- 8- Define the roles and responsibilities for the proposed actions and provide a tentative timeframe.

Annex 2

Human Rights Education in the Primary and Secondary School Systems
1st Phase (2005-2007) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education

UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

*OHCHR, Geneva
11-12 September 2006*

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