

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

SUMMARY REPORT

The fourth meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System (UNIACC) was organized on 17-18 January 2008 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. It gathered representatives from five UN system entities and affiliated organizations (ILO, UNRWA, UNESCO, OHCHR and the World Bank) including representatives of the four UNESCO Regional Bureaus for Education (Asia, Africa, Arab States and Latin America). The meeting also benefited from the participation of the UNESCO focal point for the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) and the UNESCO focal point for the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD). A representative of the Council of Europe attended the meeting as observer.

The aims of the meeting were to (a) examine approaches/entry points to further advocate the implementation of the Plan of Action of the World Programme; (b) share information on the role and activities of UNESCO Field Staff in relation to human rights education in the school system and enhance cooperation at the regional/country level to assist in the implementation of the Plan of Action; (c) exchange information on planned UN activities to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the UDHR and how these could be used to promote human rights education; (d) identify possible synergies and cooperation on human rights education in schools with two inter-agencies initiatives related to human rights/education, namely UNGEI and UNDESD.

Committee Members discussed follow-up to the joint UNIACC letters regarding the national implementation of the Plan of Action for the first phase (2005-2009) of the World Programme, sent to all Ministers of Education and UN Resident Coordinators on 10 December 2007. Copies of the letters will be forwarded to the field presences of all Committee Members, as they may support the national integration of human rights education in the school system. A standard cover note to accompany the copies of the letters was agreed upon. Committee Members also agreed that the copies of the letters, when appropriate, could be shared with other actors involved in human rights education in the school system, including donors.

Examples of existing UN initiatives which could provide occasions for promoting the World Programme were discussed and Committee Members agreed to explore how to create synergy with, in particular, the World Day against Child Labour, teacher's unions networks, and the ILO SCREAM Project.

Representatives of UNESCO's Regional Bureaus for Education for Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Arab States respectively, informed of developments in the area of human rights education in the school system in their regions and discussed potential areas of collaboration within the framework of the

World Programme. It was decided that information on practices related to the integration of human rights education in the school system collected by the four UNESCO Regional Bureaus will be transmitted to UNIACC Secretariat in order to be publicized on the UNIACC website, as a way to further inspire other initiatives.

A UNESCO initiative entitled *International Coalition of Cities against Racism* was presented as a way to further promote the Plan of Action. The initiative aims to create networks of cities interested in sharing experiences in order to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion. Each network of cities, grouped in regional coalitions, would adopt a ten point actions plan in which issues within their areas of competence such as housing, employment or education would be tackled. Committee Members agreed that this initiative represented a good venue to address, at the local level, human rights education in schools.

Activities for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as planned by UNESCO and OHCHR were presented in detail. The UNESCO Plan of Action to commemorate the UDHR 60 will include activities aiming at raising awareness on human rights education, such as the organization of conferences on human rights education. Similarly, OHCHR, as part of its activities to mark the 60th anniversary and promote human rights education, will release on 10 December 2008 a joint OHCHR/UNESCO/OSCE/Council of Europe Compendium of good practices on human rights education in the school system.

The Committee was briefed on the UNGEI and the UNDESD, to identify possible synergies. In light of the presentations, Committee members agreed that these interagency initiatives could provide a common ground for joint activities and be mutually reinforcing.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Committee members decided that the next meeting will be mainly devoted to the monitoring of the national implementation of the Plan of Action. The dates of the fifth and sixth meeting were tentatively set for 22 or 23 May 2008 and the beginning of November 2008.
