Comments on:

<mark>**DRAFT Plan of action for the fifth phase (2025–2029) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education**</mark>

1. Remarks on Children and Youth Empowerment through Human Rights Education:

The latest phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2025-2029) aligns well with global goals, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4.7. This connection highlights the importance of weaving human rights education into broader efforts for a sustainable future. The plan offers a strong framework for building human rights education strategies for children and youth, both in schools and elsewhere. Firstly, the draft plan could better emphasize addressing the unique needs of children and youth in different cultures and social settings, ensuring inclusivity and relevance. Also, the plan recognizes diverse identities and evolving capacities, but a deeper exploration is needed on how these intersecting identities (ethnicity, gender, minority status) impact access to rights and participation in human rights education. While the plan underscores children's and youth's rights and agency, it could emphasize meaningful participation and empowerment. This means going beyond them simply receiving education and ensuring they actively shape policies, advocate for their rights, and contribute to positive change. Finally, the plan could more explicitly recognize how human rights education fosters critical thinking, empathy, and solidarity among children and youth. This equips them to become effective advocates for human rights and social justice.

2. Background Remarks and Additional Information:

The **UN Committee on the Rights of the Child** accentuates on education as a fundamental right designed to equip children with life skills and promote human rights values underscores the holistic approach needed to nurture empowered and rights-conscious individuals amidst contemporary challenges like globalization and technological advancements. However, additional mention could be made regarding the need for education to foster critical thinking, empathy, and resilience in children, enabling them to navigate complex societal changes effectively.

While highlighting the significance of participation as a means for adolescents to advocate for their rights and hold states accountable, further emphasis could be placed on ensuring meaningful participation that goes beyond tokenism. This involves creating platforms and

opportunities for youth to actively engage in decision-making processes and contribute to shaping policies that affect their lives.

By acknowledging the role of human rights education in addressing global challenges, such as crime prevention and conflict resolution, there could be additional focus on empowering youth to become agents of positive change in their communities. This involves equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to address root causes of social injustices and promote human rights-based approaches to peace and development.

3. Remarks and Inputs on Specific Objectives and Components:

While the World Programme's specific objectives highlight building on past successes and fostering inclusivity, further emphasis is needed on dismantling structural barriers that prevent marginalized groups from accessing quality human rights education. Additionally, the plan would benefit from clearer guidance on key components and robust data collection mechanisms to track progress and ensure program effectiveness. Empowering youth participation and leadership is crucial, but the plan can be strengthened by emphasizing environments that nurture youth leaders and provide meaningful decision-making opportunities. Similarly, the outlined actions for implementing human rights education policies would be enhanced by addressing systemic barriers within educational institutions and ensuring policies align with international human rights standards. These improvements would enhance the programme's path towards a truly inclusive and impactful future.

4. Feedback and Contributions on Policy Formulation and Associated Implementation Measures

- Formal Education Policies:

The plan rightly emphasizes the integration of human rights education into formal education systems. However, it could further emphasize the need for continuous teacher training and professional development to effectively deliver human rights education across all levels of schooling. Additionally, ensuring the active participation of children and youth in the development of curricula and educational materials is crucial for relevance and effectiveness. This could involve student councils, youth forums, and other participatory mechanisms. Moreover, there should be a focus on monitoring and evaluating the implementation of policies to assess their impact on promoting human rights values and attitudes among students.

- Non-formal and Informal Education Policies:

While the plan acknowledges the importance of non-formal and informal human rights education conducted by civil society, there could be further emphasis on recognizing and supporting the autonomy and expertise of children- and youth-led movements and organizations in shaping their own educational initiatives. Subsequently, providing financial support and resources for grassroots organizations and youth-led initiatives is essential for their sustainability and impact. This could involve establishing funding mechanisms specifically dedicated to supporting human rights education programs led by children and youth.

- Coherence Among State Policies:

Ensuring coherence and synergy among various state policies and strategies related to human rights education, children, youth, and other relevant areas is critical for a holistic approach to promoting human rights values and principles. This could involve establishing inter-ministerial task forces or coordinating bodies to facilitate collaboration and information sharing.

Furthermore, it is essential to emphasize the importance of addressing intersectional issues, including the connections between human rights education, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. This approach will ensure that policy responses are comprehensive and effectively meet the diverse needs and experiences of children and youth.

- Policy Implementation and Evaluation:

Developing comprehensive implementation and evaluation measures is essential for assessing the effectiveness and impact of human rights education policies. This could involve establishing clear indicators and benchmarks for measuring progress, as well as mechanisms for collecting feedback from stakeholders, including students, teachers, and community members. Also, adequate financing and resource allocation are crucial for the successful implementation of human rights education policies. Therefore, there should be a focus on securing sustainable funding sources and allocating resources effectively to support human rights education initiatives at all levels.

- International Obligations:

Fulfilling international obligations concerning human rights education for children and youth requires active engagement with international monitoring mechanisms and cooperation with relevant stakeholders. This could involve promoting the ratification of international instruments related to education and human rights, as well as aligning national policies with regional and international standards and recommendations. Furthermore, there could be efforts

to enhance cooperation and collaboration with non-governmental organizations, national human rights institutions, and other civil society actors in preparing national reports and implementing recommendations from international monitoring mechanisms. This could involve establishing multi-stakeholder platforms for dialogue and coordination on human rights education initiatives.

5. **Observations on the Teaching and Learning Processes, Tools, and Additional Materials**

While the plan addresses digital rights, it could emphasize fostering critical thinking and digital literacy skills to empower young people to navigate the online world safely and responsibly. Additionally, promoting digital citizenship and ethical behavior can combat cyber-bullying, hate speech, and online harm. Digital citizenship refers to the responsible and ethical use of technology and digital platforms by individuals, encompassing online safety, etiquette, and literacy. It involves understanding and adhering to legal, ethical, and societal norms in the digital realm to promote positive and respectful online interactions. Highlighting the role of educators and parents in supporting healthy digital habits and balancing online activities is also crucial.

The plan rightly connects human rights and Ecological balance. However, it could further emphasize empowering young people to take action. This could involve hands-on learning through community projects and environmental activism initiatives. Additionally, the plan should highlight education's role in promoting climate justice and addressing the disproportionate impact of environmental harm on marginalized communities.

Both sections emphasize fostering positive values, but the plan could strengthen the role of educators and role models in embodying these values and creating a culture of human rights and environmental responsibility. Highlighting the importance of integrating HRE throughout the curriculum and creating inclusive learning environments that value diversity, equity, and inclusion is also key. This could involve incorporating diverse perspectives in materials and promoting dialogue on social justice issues.

By prioritizing these aspects, the World Programme can ensure children and youth are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become champions of human rights and environmental sustainability.

6. **Remarks on key actors and their roles**

The draft plan for national human rights education provides a valuable framework. To enhance its impact, it would be beneficial to incorporate the critical roles of various key stakeholders. Although the plan recognizes the expertise of National Human Rights Institutions, it does not fully leverage their capacity for monitoring progress and reporting on human rights education initiatives. Additionally, the plan could explicitly highlight their crucial role in training educators and developing curricula.

The plan recognizes the importance of Child and Youth Representatives but does not address how to ensure their meaningful participation. Establishing formal structures like advisory boards with diverse representation, including marginalized groups, would create a channel for their voices and perspectives. The Civil Society Organizations and Networks organizations possess specialized knowledge and experience. Hence, encouraging partnerships between them and educational institutions would promote innovative programs. Additionally, financial support for their initiatives would strengthen their contributions. The plan focuses on integrating human rights education into existing systems, but does not address teacher training. Ensuring continuous professional development for educators is crucial. Additionally, involving educational establishments in curriculum development would guarantee alignment with human rights standards.

The plan could benefit from recognizing a broader spectrum of actors, including social service providers, media, community leaders, and cultural institutions and artists. Encouraging collaboration among these stakeholders would significantly enhance the reach and impact of human rights education across various platforms and resources. While the plan acknowledges the roles of the UN and intergovernmental organizations, it could emphasize the importance of regular interaction with UN bodies to gain valuable insights and access funding opportunities. Clear accountability mechanisms and dedicated funding are essential for the success of the coordinating body. Establishing regular reporting processes would ensure efficient implementation and enable proactive addressing of challenges.

The plan could be strengthened by creating diverse platforms, including digital tools, to gather input from a wider range of children and youth, with a specific focus on ensuring marginalized voices are heard. By incorporating these overlooked opportunities and fostering a more collaborative approach, the national human rights education strategy can achieve a more impactful and sustainable implementation. Remember, regular monitoring, evaluation, and

international cooperation are key to ongoing improvement and ensuring alignment with global human rights standards.

7. Observations on International Cooperation

While the current plan outlines reporting to the Human Rights Council, it lacks crucial details for successful implementation. To ensure standardized and comprehensive reporting, clear guidelines on report format and content are necessary. Additionally, a feedback mechanism allowing the Human Rights Council to comment and recommend improvements on national reports would be beneficial. Building state capacity through training and resources for report preparation is also essential. Most importantly, stakeholder engagement throughout the reporting period is crucial. This can be achieved through regular updates and consultations with children and youth organizations.

Beyond reporting, the plan could benefit from a more robust framework for international support. Currently, specific channels and resources for accessing international aid are unclear. Establishing a dedicated framework for coordinating international support efforts would maximize efficiency and avoid duplication. Moreover, implementing mechanisms to monitor and ensure accountability for provided support would strengthen the system.

To maximize international cooperation and assistance, the plan should consider creating specific platforms for collaboration among various actors. A centralized database for sharing resources, best practices, and educational materials would be a valuable asset. Incentives for participation by transnational corporations and financial institutions could further bolster support for human rights education initiatives.

Finally, the plan could be strengthened by emphasizing child-friendly approaches in all materials and programs, particularly for vulnerable children. Establishing long-term funding mechanisms is essential for the sustainability of initiatives. Regularly evaluating the impact of international support and making necessary adjustments based on findings will ensure continuous improvement.

In conclusion, by addressing these missed inputs and emphasizing detailed planning, inclusive practices, continuous stakeholder engagement, clear guidelines, sustainable funding, and effective coordination mechanisms, international cooperation and support can play a vital role in the successful implementation and monitoring of national human rights education strategies.

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