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**PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:
INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

**Implementation of the Plan of Action of the United Nations
Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004**

Report of the High Commissioner

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 18 of Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/74. Since the last session of the Commission, the High Commissioner for Human Rights reported on the implementation of the Plan of Action of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education to the General Assembly (A/57/323). Accordingly, the present report provides only supplementary information received in the period from mid-July to mid-November 2002 in response to the notes verbales and letters addressed in May 2002 to all Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, drawing their attention to General Assembly resolution 56/167 and to Commission resolution 2002/74 and soliciting information on their implementation. The report includes also information on related activities undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in this period. Additional information about public information activities in the field of human rights is available in the relevant report of the Secretary-General to the Commission (E/CN.4/2003/99).

In paragraph 17 of resolution 2002/74, the Commission requested, in addition to this report, a study on the follow-up to the Decade. The study will be presented to the Commission in a separate report (E/CN.4/2003/101).

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION	3
A. Components two and three: strengthening international and regional programmes and capacities for human rights education	3
B. Components four and five: strengthening national and local programmes and capacities for human rights education	5
III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9

I. INTRODUCTION

The present report follows the structure of the Decade's Plan of Action, whose programme for implementation seeks to: assess needs and formulate effective strategies for human rights education (Component one); strengthen programmes and capacities for human rights education at the international, regional, national and local levels (Components two to five); develop in a coordinated way effective human rights education materials (Component six); strengthen the role and capacity of the mass media in the furtherance of human rights education (Component seven); and disseminate globally the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Component eight). The report highlights only the advance in those components for which the Office of the High Commissioner has received related information.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

A. Components two and three: Strengthening international and regional programmes and capacities for human rights education

A.1 United Nations System

A.1.1 *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)*

In line with the recommendations of the mid-term global evaluation of the Decade (see A/55/360) and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, the contribution of OHCHR to the Decade's objectives has continued to focus on the following courses of action:

(a) Ensuring basic worldwide coordination for the Decade

OHCHR has continued to disseminate information on the Decade and on human rights education in general by answering related enquiries from interested representatives of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and others. During the reporting period, a new and regularly updated page of the OHCHR web site dealing specifically with the Decade and human rights education in general has been developed and made available at <http://www.unhchr.ch/education/main.htm>.

(b) Facilitating networking and information-sharing among Decade's actors

OHCHR has continued to update and enrich its *Database on Human Rights Education* materials, organizations and programmes (available through the OHCHR web site at <http://www.unhchr.ch/hredu.nsf>), which currently contains more than 2,300 entries, as well as its *Resource Collection on Human Rights Education*, which includes materials for human rights education and training produced at all levels and is publicly accessible at OHCHR headquarters in Geneva (details on these two projects are provided in previous reports). OHCHR has substantively participated in and supported training and educational activities organized by various institutions and organizations at the international and regional levels. For instance, in November 2002 OHCHR has organized two workshops at Education International's Conference

“Living and Learning Together - the role and responsibilities of educators and their Unions”, which took place in Malta and gathered about 150 teachers’ union leaders from about 50 countries.

(c) Supporting national capacities for human rights education

OHCHR has continued its technical cooperation activities aimed at strengthening national capacities in the field of human rights, including human rights education, training and public information activities. Details are provided in the reports of the Secretary-General on advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights (E/CN.4/2003/112) and on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (E/CN.4/2003/110) to the Commission.

(d) Assisting grass-roots human rights education initiatives

The ACT (Assisting Communities Together) Project, initiated in 1998 in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), assists organizations and individuals at the local level in carrying out educational activities aimed at strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights in local communities. From 1998 to 2000, 166 projects were supported in 30 countries.

In December 2001, OHCHR, in collaboration with UNDP, launched the third phase of the Project, which is currently being implemented in 29 countries. This phase is marked by an increased involvement of UNDP country offices, which have allocated specific funds for the implementation of the project in their countries.

The application forms, a brochure with examples of activities supported between 1998 and 2000 and other details on the ACT Project are available upon request from OHCHR in Geneva and from its field presences, as well as from concerned UNDP country offices.

(e) Developing a selected number of human rights training materials

Work has continued on some of the educational packages developed within the Decade programme, and in particular those aimed at judges, prosecutors and lawyers, and prison officials. In the development of these materials, OHCHR works in close cooperation with relevant experts and organizations. In the reporting period, *Human rights in the administration of justice: a manual on human rights for judges, prosecutors and lawyers* has been published; the related *Facilitator’s Guide* is being finalized. Work has also continued on the finalization of *Human rights and prisons: a package on human rights training for prison officials*.

OHCHR has continued to publish other human rights materials and to disseminate them among governmental and non-governmental organizations. An updated list of publications is available on the OHCHR web site and upon request from the Office.

(f) Globally disseminating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

OHCHR has continued updating and revising the Web section of its web site on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (available at <http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm>), containing more than 320 language versions of the UDHR and the complete list of OHCHR worldwide collection of UDHR materials.

A.1.2 World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO reported on the forthcoming launch of a publications series on health and human rights, aiming at explaining the linkages between health work and human rights to WHO staff and other health, development and human rights practitioners. WHO also developed a health and human rights training programme for its staff both at headquarters and in the country offices. It further produced a cartoon entitled *The right to health* to improve awareness among public health practitioners and the general public, including vulnerable populations.

A.2 Other intergovernmental organizations

The Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities within the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe underlined the importance of intercultural education to promote non-discrimination, suggested ways to achieve this in the formal education system through the promotion of contacts among students and teachers of different communities, the inclusion of minorities' cultures and histories in school curricula and the fostering of educational establishments which promote tolerance and reflect diversity. In the wider society, media are considered to have a crucial role both in combating stereotypes and encouraging fair representation of society.

A.3 Non-governmental organizations

The International Publishers Association (IPA), which gathers 78 specialized institutions in 65 countries, highlighted the importance of awareness-raising activities concerning freedom of expression and freedom to publish. IPA also recalled the need to take into consideration intellectual property rights in human rights education activities.

B. Components four and five: strengthening national and local programmes and capacities for human rights education

The Plan of Action for the Decade provides for the establishment, at the initiative of Governments or other relevant institutions, of national committees for human rights education which should include a broad coalition of governmental and non-governmental actors and be responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive, effective and sustainable national plan of action for human rights education, in consultation with regional and international organizations. Such a plan could constitute a part of the overall national plan of action for human rights, when applicable. OHCHR has developed related Guidelines (A/52/469/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) which have been widely disseminated.

In the reporting period, OHCHR has received the following information:

(a) **Austria:** the Government reported on the creation of a network of human rights coordinators (one in each Federal ministry) responsible, inter alia, for questions related to human rights education; they attend periodic seminars organized by the Federal Academy of Public Administration, whose objective is to increase network efficiency as well as human rights education efforts in the public administration. In 1997, the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights jointly established the Service Centre for Human Rights Education which is Austria's leading institution for the development of human rights education in schools and for advice and assistance to teachers. The Service Centre has developed networking and information tools such as a web site and an electronic newsletter, as well as educational and training programmes (teacher training, peer training) and materials.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is engaged in highlighting human rights education in United Nations forums. Also, during the Austrian presidency of the Human Security Network, human rights education has been declared as a priority item; in this context, the manual *Understanding Human Rights* is being developed, and a governmental declaration on the strengthening of human rights education will be adopted in Graz in 2003. Human rights education activities are also part of various development cooperation programmes carried out with several countries.

Human rights education is incorporated into national legislation concerning the formal education system; in primary and secondary schools, human rights are included in subjects such as civic education, legal education, history and philosophy, and specific anti-discrimination and anti-racism educational programmes are carried out. The Ministry for Education, Science and Culture regularly encourages provincial educational authorities and teachers to develop human rights education programmes and celebrate specific occasions, such as the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Human Rights Day.

Finally, the Security Academy of the Ministry of the Interior coordinates and develops training activities for the Ministry's personnel, notably police and gendarmerie.

(b) **China:** the Government informed that human rights education is provided through legal education programmes for all citizens, focusing on studying the law and how to apply it; in this regard, three 5-year plans have already been designed and implemented, reaching so far about 640 million people. As a result of these programmes, citizens are more familiar with the law and are increasingly using it for suing public officials, while the latter are more careful to act in accordance with the law.

In the formal education system, both moral and legal education are provided. Moral education focuses on issues such as love for the country and for life, respect for the elders and for the family, concern for the environment and for society, awareness of the moral standards of society and willingness to abide by them, and a sense of discipline. Legal education focuses on fostering respect for the authority of constitutional law, development of awareness of democracy and of the legal system, the lawful enjoyment of civil rights and the performance of civil obligations as set forth in the Constitution. Specially trained teachers deliver such courses, using

specific textbooks and various methodologies; also, legal education is a compulsory subject in teacher training courses. Within universities, the subject of international law, as taught in law schools, includes human rights law; other university and college students undergo legal education programmes, also through out-of-school and community activities. Research on human rights and on human rights education is carried out in various universities.

(c) **Costa Rica** reported that one of the main objectives of the national education plan is that pupils should know their rights; to this end, the “Values” and the “Culture of Peace” Projects are implemented. Special attention is devoted to pre-service human rights training for teachers; in this area, the Government highlighted the work of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies on Childhood and Adolescence (INEINA) within the National University (UNA). At the university level, human rights education programmes are carried out by, among others, the Law Faculty of the Costa Rica University, the National University and the State Distance University (UNED); the University for Peace offers a Master’s degree in International Law and Human Rights. Human rights training for administration of justice officials is organized by the Judicial School (whose activities are also occasionally open to the public), the National Police Academy as well as the National School of Penitentiary Police. The Government of Costa Rica also highlighted the many educational activities undertaken by the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights, which include training courses, production and distribution of materials, the development of a human rights section within the Children’s Museum, etc.

(d) **Croatia** informed that the National Committee for Human Rights Education, set up in 1996, adopted in 1999 the first part of the National Programme for Human Rights Education targeting the school system; the Programme is currently being implemented in all schools. The second part of the Programme, which deals with human rights education for adults and the media, has recently been completed; the university level is still to be approached. The implementation of the Programme is the responsibility of governmental authorities, educational establishments and NGOs. The Government of Croatia, in cooperation with OHCHR, opened a Human Rights Documentation and Education Centre in October 2000 in Zagreb, which is accessible to all interested citizens, offers a range of books and documentation and organizes seminars and round tables, as well as training for human rights educators. The Government also reported the organization of a series of public information activities, such as dissemination of human rights documents and publications.

(e) **Jordan**’s Ministry of Education informed that a series of laws have been passed in the period 1990-2001, focusing on the importance of creating a democratic and human rights climate in schools. Information on international and national human rights law has been incorporated into school curricula and textbooks; teaching materials, also addressing the issue of teaching methodologies, have been developed. Human rights awareness-raising programmes have been designed to promote the role of women leaders, the rights of the child and conflict resolution methodologies; in cooperation with the Royal Human Rights Committee, the Ministry has contributed to the training of administration of justice officials. In cooperation with the Mizan Institute, human rights and children’s rights clubs have been set up in a number of Jordanian schools. Jordan is further planning to develop human rights training for educational managers, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and to establish a human rights education and training centre.

(f) **Malta**'s authorities informed of the inclusion of human rights principles in the National Minimum Curriculum; they are reflected in the syllabuses of subjects like social studies, European studies, history and personal and social education. Related training sessions for teachers are organized. Activities aimed at sensitizing students to human rights issues are regularly held in the classes. A particular emphasis is put on citizenship and global education, in cooperation with the Council of Europe; in this context, Maltese schools organized events in 2001 on the occasion of the Council of Europe's Global Education Week, entitled "Children and Youth Rights Now". The Government of Malta underlined the cooperation developed with NGOs in the area of human rights education.

(g) The Government of **Morocco** initiated in 1994 a partnership between the Ministry for Human Rights and the Ministry for Education with the aim of elaborating a National Programme for Human Rights Education. In this context, the following activities have been undertaken: revision of school textbooks to ensure conformity with human rights standards; training seminars for teachers and their supervisors; and pilot-testing of the National Programme in both urban and rural areas of the country. Morocco further reported on the initiative to hold the first Arabic gathering on human rights education within the framework of the Decade, in cooperation with UNDP and UNESCO, which led to the adoption of the Rabat Declaration on the elaboration of a regional strategy for human rights education. In partnership with OHCHR, Morocco has also established a Human Rights Training, Information and Documentation Centre, which develops related materials and organizes training sessions for prison officials, judges, NGO leaders, etc. Close working relationships have been developed with international and national NGOs as well as with similar centres abroad.

(h) **Namibia** reported on the establishment of a series of institutions charged with the promotion of human rights, including the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee on Human Rights serviced by the Ministry of Justice, which comprises representatives of different ministries and which has organized training sessions for professional groups such as police, immigration officers, community leaders, judges and lawyers. The Human Rights Documentation Centre, located at the University of Namibia, disseminates human rights information materials; the Justice Training Centre is responsible for human rights training for magistrates, prosecutors, judges and related personnel; the Law Reform and Development Commission is active in legal research and ensures that national law conforms with international human rights standards.

(i) **Nicaragua** reported the inclusion of human rights, as contained in international, regional and national human rights documents, in pre-school and school curricula, as a cross-cutting issue, and in specific subjects such as moral and civic education; related programmes involve also teachers and parents. In secondary schools, "student governments" have been established so as to prepare students to civic and political responsibilities. Nicaragua has also been promoting democracy education since 1990 through training sessions for teachers and social workers, both on principles as well as appropriate teaching methodologies; elaboration of teaching materials; organization of drawing and essay competitions; strengthening of governmental bodies responsible for this area; development of extra-curricular activities; and other public awareness activities, for instance through the media. Educational programmes are also specifically elaborated on the rights of specific groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS and the disabled.

(j) The Government of **Turkey** reported on the recent activities of the National Committee on the Decade for Human Rights Education, which is composed of university professors, representatives of ministries and NGOs. From September 2001 to June 2002 the Committee organized human rights seminars for deputy governors of several provinces of the country; training sessions, in partnership with the Council of Europe, for police and gendarmerie trainers, as well as in-service training programmes for judges and public prosecutors; essay and drawing competitions for prisoners and prison officials, as well as poster and cartoon competitions for young people; and human rights training for social workers working with street children.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the mid-term global evaluation of the progress made towards the achievement of the objectives of the Decade (A/55/360) includes a series of recommendations for action during the Decade's remaining years.

It highlights the need for Governments to fulfil the commitments made at the international level to develop national strategies for human rights education which are comprehensive (in terms of outreach), participatory (in terms of involvement of all relevant actors) and effective (in terms of educational methodologies). In this regard, priority should be given to sustainable approaches (i.e. training of trainers, integration of human rights into all relevant training and educational curricula). In addition, given the respective potential and capacities in this field, national strategies should be developed, implemented and evaluated through partnerships within and among actors, both governmental and non-governmental, working in a spirit of mutual respect.

Regional and international organizations and institutions should continue to support such national initiatives by facilitating the sharing of information and materials, creating and strengthening networks, the training of trainers and related activities. In this regard, the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education represents a major opportunity and mobilization mechanism to focus the educational efforts of the international community.

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