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**CALL FOR INPUTS TO THE DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION  
FOR THE 4TH PHASE (2020-2024) OF THE WORLD  
PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION (HRC  
RESOLUTION 39/3)**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has requested the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) to provide inputs on the draft Action Plan for the fourth phase (2020-2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE).

DIHR acknowledges that our suggestions provided in response to the earlier request for contributions to the 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the WPHRE (May 2018) are largely reflected in the draft Action Plan and extends its gratitude for this opportunity to contribute with further inputs to the refinement of the draft Action Plan for finalization.

In our response to this request, we will first address two general observations on how we think the Action Plan may be strengthened. Followingly, we will propose 18 more specific inputs to individual paragraphs in the current draft Action Plan for OHCHR's consideration.

**GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

DIHR congratulates the OHCHR on a very comprehensive draft Action Plan. The draft Action Plan covers a wide array of important aspects and elements relating to both the methodological and practical aspects of HRE, the variances when addressing the formal, non-formal and informal education sectors, as well as particularities towards the target group of Youth.

In recognition of the complexity that encompass the many diverse elements, components and specificities that surround the general framework of HRE, the differences within the formal, non-formal and informal education sectors, as well as the diversity within Youth as a specific target group, our inputs are offered as considerations for OHCHR to make additional strategic and methodological choices to limit the broad scope of the current draft Action Plan, in order to make it even more pragmatic and implementational.

In our contribution for the 4<sup>th</sup> Phase of the WPHRE in May 2018, DIHR proposed four main points that the formulation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Phase could address in order to define its scope and content:

- Lack of follow up on the previous phases of WPHRE
- Appointment of a national HRE focal point and adaptation of a National Plan of Action on HRE
- State reporting and mainstreaming of HRE
- Formulation of concrete learning objectives

DIHR recognizes that the proposed draft Action Plan has addressed all four points proposed, and particularly compliments the strong focus on and inclusion of learning objectives in the draft Action Plan (section II.B. in particular) centred around the HRE learning dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Also, DIHR finds that state reporting and mainstreaming of HRE is comprehensively considered throughout the relevant sections within the draft Action Plan (and in particular in section II.F.). And although we also find that following up on previous phases of the WPHRE and issues around national planning on HRE are well considered in the current draft Action Plan, DIHR recommends that these points be further strengthened, particularly with the aim of also using the final Action Plan as a platform to promote increased commitment from states and governments for more effective national implementation and state accountability on its HRE obligations.

#### **General Observation 1: Increased focus on Monitoring and Evaluation**

One way to contribute to a stronger commitment from the state and its educational institutions to fulfil HRE obligations, is to provide a solid framework for better monitoring and follow up on HRE. Consequently, if states commit to reporting on the indicators within the proposed framework, this will provide an evidence-base for improved planning and implementation of HRE initiatives and associated resource allocation. Further, by committing to reporting on a globally standardized indicator framework for HRE, the state's accountability towards implementation of its HRE obligations is similarly secured.

Through a productive collaboration spanning over more than a year, the OHCHR and DIHR are at the final stages of developing and piloting a simple and flexible indicator framework for HRE to inform the programming of a future global database. It is envisioned that National Human Rights Institutions can use this framework to position themselves as key data providers on issues pertaining to the WPHRE and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target 4.7, paving the way for a more effective common framework for state reporting on human rights education related to WPHRE and target 4.7.

The draft Action Plan is very clear in its commitment to align with the 2030 agenda generally, and target 4.7 specifically, to explore synergies between educational concepts and methods (e.g. 10). This is indeed relevant, taking into account not only the continuation from previous phases and their close association with the SDG agenda and target 4.7, but also looking forward in as much as the SDGs do not have a specific Goal addressing Youth. Instead Youth form parts of the inherent target groups of many of the SDG targets, as well as for a specific Youth campaign.<sup>1</sup>

DIHR therefore recommends that the indicator framework for HRE (and SDG target 4.7) currently being finalized is further expanded to also capture progress on the 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the WPHRE, in particular in relation to Youth. And that, upon this expansion, is recommended as the key indicator framework for states in their monitoring for international reporting on not only HRE obligations in general, and SDG target 4.7 in particular, but also for progress under all four phases of the WPHRE.

This would accommodate for some of the challenges associated with measuring progress for Youth targeted HRE interventions. These include that indicators measuring HRE initiatives specifically for Youth are difficult to capture, because many of these initiatives take place in non-formal settings. This in return means that methodological choices on what can be measured and what cannot need to be made from the outset of implementing the Action Plan.

### **General Observation 2: Integrated HRE and Youth Coordination.**

As noted in our contribution (May 2018) to formulation of a 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the WPHRE, DIHR finds that there is still a considerable lack of commitment from the part of the governments with regards to formulating an overall National Plan of Action (NAP) on HRE and realizing it. This also counting the previous phases of the WPHRE.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/youth/>

DIHR notes with appreciation that the process for national implementation of the final Action Plan receives comprehensive attention, with a full section committed to this (section II.E.). However, despite strong encouragement to do so in previous phases of the WPHRE, many states still do not have an overall NAP for HRE – or even have specific sections dedicated to HRE in their overall national human right plan, or educational plans or strategies, where these exist. Therefore, DIHR proposes that OHCHR considers the feasibility of the recommendations in the draft Action Plan to develop an entirely new strategy and institutional framework for a strategy on human rights education for youth (48-55).

DIHR has concerns that this recommendation may instead have the adverse effect of side-lining the final Action Plan for the 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the WPHRE in relevant national processes, particularly in resource-poor countries where it is the most needed, because countries for various reasons do not have human and financial resources or capacities to commit to the prerequisites for developing a coherent and coordinated national strategy for HRE for youth (48). In other states there may be lack of political will to go this far on HRE. Instead, DIHR recommends that the final Action Plan provides recommendations for and suggests concrete steps on how to effectively build on existing strategies and national plans for education, human rights and/or HRE and include a specific focus on Youth, where needed. DIHR also understands this to be the recommendation in 27.

### **SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS**

Apart from the two general observations above, DIHR have the following specific inputs for specific paragraphs within the draft Action Plan:

**18:** The right to education is not limited to belonging to only children and youth but belongs to all human being. Also, SDG 4.7 talks about ensuring *all learners* acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development

**22:** In line with our general observations above, DIHR suggests that a specific objective concerning holding states accountable for the previous obligations on HRE (including for Youth), e.g. through increased focus on monitoring progress, be included.

**22(a):** In line with our general observations above, DIHR believes that this may be too ambitious given progress to date under the former phases of the WPHRE and taking into account the limited resources to

comply for many nation states. We suggest that emphasis instead be on integrating specific focus on Youth into existing or future national strategies and action plans for education in general and HRE in particular.

**22(b):** DIHR suggests that it is clearly elaborated what is understood by expanding HRE for, with and by youth in informal learning, as most of the learning within this space takes place in what can be considered the private sphere (family, community, non-public work place), and thus a sphere in which the state is not normally advised to regulate in detail.

**24:** DIHR recommends not to introduce a new definition or interpretation of HRE other than the one outlined in the 2011 Declaration in HRE and Training. In our understanding, recommendations put forth to be included in HRE for youth in both 24(a) and 24(b) are covered by the ‘through’ in general definition of HRE.

**25:** DIHR recommends reconsidering the formulation that *‘action within each component must engage young people as key leaders and partners at all stages’* but limit it to the ones where it is relevant. For example, formulation of policies and laws is one of the components, and as much as youth can be consulted in this process, when it comes to adopting policies, laws and regulations this is the entitlement of politicians within the formal structures of democratic government.

**27:** Similar to 25, it is suggested in this paragraph that youth should be equal partners to those responsible for developing policies for ensuring human rights and HRE in formal education. DIHR recognizes that formulation of formal education policies is officially the legal responsibility of Governments and Parliaments and other parties cannot be considered equal in this process. Although other actors, such as Youth, CSOs and NHRIs, cannot be considered equal to those in government and parliament, this does not mean that they should not be consulted and included, so we suggest that the paragraph be reformulated to reflect this.

**27(a):** DIHR suggest that ‘curricula’ is also add, as this recommendation should not be limited to laws only but address the entire legal framework for formal education (in line with the former phases of the WPHRE).

**27(e):** DIHR assesses that making human rights training a criterion for state licensing or certification is a very comprehensive task for states inherently carries a risk for failure for states, since most states will not

have the necessary resources (human and financial) to ensure this process for all the professions proposed. Furthermore, this may also encourage counterproductive over-regulation of the teacher profession by states/governments (see similar point below for 28, regarding the non-formal education sector).

**28 and 41(e):** DIHR has reservations relating to state licensing or certification of human rights educators in non-formal human rights education, as well as policies to ensure recognition of CSOs and educators conducting HRE in the non-formal education sector. This may inadvertently provide a possibility for governments and states to sanction HRE efforts in the non-formal sector. Introducing state licensing, certification and policy regulation may instead be used as a measure that governments can misuse to limit human rights training by civil society actors, thereby shrinking civic space. It can similarly limit the space for HRE initiatives of NHRIs, if relevant staff have to be officially sanctioned to carry out HRE interventions in the non-formal sector. Instead, DIHR proposes that the policy measures targeting the non-formal education sector should be more of an enabling nature, e.g. development of standards for non-formal HRE (as per international standards on HRE), mentorships and professional support, capacity-building programmes (as also proposed in 37-41), that ensure safe and protected teaching spaces for non-formal HRE educators and training (as also suggested in 46). It could also be worth addressing how NHRIs have a role to play in HRE for Youth in the non-formal education sector.

**30:** It could be considered if this is relevant at policy level, or if it could be inherent to a National Action Plan instead.

**32(d):** DIHR recommends specific mention of NHRIs.

**48:** In line with our general observations and specific observation regarding 22(a), DIHR suggests that it be considered that HRE for Youth be integrated into existing (or planned) national strategies and action plans, to allow states to allocate adequate human and financial resources without overburdening national resources at large.

**49:** Similar to the specific observation above (48), DIHR suggest that the designated focal point (or coordinating body) should be for all WPHRE target groups and phases (including for youth), to avoid resource constraints on states.

**55:** In line with our above recommendations for including Youth as equal partners in policy and law formulation processes, we recommend

that this is formulated as to ensure that Youth are duly consulted in the processes surrounding the development of a national strategy, in the acknowledgement that the final responsibility lies on the elected representatives.

**56:** DIHR suggests that NHRIs or a department under the MoE are specifically appointed to be responsible for carrying out a national baseline study.

**60(b) and 61:** DIHR proposes that the ambition to conduct annual national evaluations may be unrealistic for some states, particularly in light of the experiences from former phases, where there has been very limited reporting from states and NHRIs in general. Instead, DIHR proposes that such evaluations be aligned with the introduction of a national/global HRE indicator Framework, in line with our general observation on this.

Yours sincerely,

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SPECIAL ADVISOR

DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS