

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

SUMMARY REPORT

*OHCHR, Geneva
3 December 2010*

The seventh meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System (UNIACC) was organized on 3 December 2009 at OHCHR Headquarters in Geneva. It gathered representatives from seven UN system entities and affiliated organizations (ILO, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNRWA). A representative of the Council of Europe participated as an observer.

As the 1st phase (2005-09) of the WPHRE is concluding in 2009, the meeting mainly focused on:

- (i) how to conduct the evaluation of the implementation of the 1st phase, on which the Committee is requested to report to the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly;
- (ii) the elaboration of a Plan of Action for the 2nd phase of the World Programme (2010-2014), requested by the Human Rights Council; and
- (iii) future modalities for inter-agency cooperation under the 2nd phase.

The Committee first reviewed the work undertaken by Members during the period March - December 2009 in order to support human rights education in the school system and the implementation of the Plan of Action. As the 1st phase of the World Programme (2005 – 2009) was drawing to a close, the Committee then discussed at length the methodology for evaluating the implementation of the WPHRE 1st phase and its Plan of Action, as mandated by Human Rights Council resolution 12/4 and by the Plan of Action (paragraphs 49 - 51). The evaluation was mandated as a joint UNIACC activity and the meeting generated substantive feedback from UNIACC agencies on the basis of a draft note verbale and questionnaire for Governments prepared by OHCHR. It was agreed that the focus of the evaluation would be the implementation of the Plan of Action for the 1st phase, especially as regards the five components of human rights education in the primary and secondary school systems, on which Governments would report with the help of a questionnaire and related guidance. OHCHR foresaw sending the revised note verbale and questionnaire to all Member States by January 2010 with a 2-month deadline for submitting national reports. The final evaluation report, to be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly at its 65th session by UNIACC, is to be based on information contained in Member States' national reports. The Committee suggested various means of drawing the attention of national authorities to this evaluation and encouraging them to prepare national reports in consultation with other stakeholders such as national human rights institutions and civil society.

In the context of the transition from the 1st to the 2nd phase of the World Programme, the Committee was briefed on the results of the OHCHR consultation on the focus of the 2nd phase of the World Programme (High Commissioner's report A/HRC/12/36), which was reflected in Human Rights Council resolution 12/4. This resolution determined a much broader focus for the 2nd phase (2010 - 2014): higher education, teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel, while also continuing the implementation of human rights education in primary and secondary school systems. OHCHR is required to develop, in cooperation with relevant intergovernmental organizations, in particular UNESCO, a new Plan of Action for the 2nd phase. Given the breadth of target areas identified for the 2nd phase, the Committee pointed to the challenges of preparing a Plan of Action covering all the aforementioned actors in the same document. The Committee contemplated various possible approaches to the drafting of the 2nd phase Plan of Action. It was suggested that drawing up an inventory of existing areas of activity with the constituencies mentioned in the resolution (i.e. higher education, teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel) could provide useful background for the preparation of the Plan of Action.

The Committee also received updates on the development of new methodological tools by OHCHR as well as on the preparation of a draft UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, by the Drafting Group of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council, which would seek to reinforce existing human rights education efforts.

The final agenda item was devoted to an exchange of views on future inter-agency collaboration, bearing in mind that the Inter-Agency Committee was established specifically for the WPHRE 1st phase (2005 – 2009) in order to provide coherent and coordinated UN support to national implementation of human rights education in the school system. It was recalled that the Committee's mandate resulted in advocacy through joint letters, two joint statements and the organization of six joint events with materials and tools related to human rights education and produced by UNIACC agencies. In reviewing the Committee's achievements and working methods, participants welcomed OHCHR's support to UNIACC and the increased cooperation on human rights education at the national level due to the United Nations' collective advocacy through the work of the Committee. The several joint UNIACC initiatives during the Committee's term have contributed to demonstrating joint United Nations commitment to human rights education.

Discussion ensued on what kind of mechanism may be useful or needed for the implementation of the 2nd phase, given the broad new focus on a number of target groups. A consensus emerged that it would be useful to continue a similar inter-agency mechanism in the 2nd phase, with the possible option of a broader composition or occasionally enlarged meetings. The challenge would be to find a way of maintaining cohesion of this group given the new broad focus. The Committee's suggestions for improvement would be taken into consideration in order to find best modalities for continuing and strengthening the existing cooperation in the 2nd phase.

Another Committee meeting may still need to be convened in order to discuss the draft evaluation report for the WPHRE 1st phase, in spring 2010. This will be clarified in due course.
