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

World Programme for Human Rights Education*

Report of the High Commissioner

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/61. It includes information on related events which took place at the General Assembly during 2005 and related activities carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

* The present report is being submitted late so as to include as much updated information as possible (in particular, information related to relevant activities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights undertaken in early January 2006).

1. In its resolution 2005/61 (paras. 2 and 3), the Commission on Human Rights welcomed the proclamation by the General Assembly, on 10 December 2004, of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, which began on 1 January 2005. The Commission also encouraged the General Assembly to adopt, possibly during its fifty-ninth session and no later than the end of 2005, the revised draft plan of action (A/59/525/Rev.1) for the first phase (2005-2007) of the World Programme. Finally, the Commission requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to disseminate widely among States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations the revised draft plan of action, once adopted by the General Assembly.

2. On 14 July 2005, the General Assembly, in its resolution 59/113 B, adopted the Plan of Action for the first phase (2005-2007) of the World Programme, focusing on primary and secondary school systems. Drawing from the principles and frameworks set by international human rights instruments, the Plan of Action highlights that human rights education in the school system involves not only the integration of human rights in all educational processes and tools (curricula, textbooks, materials, methods and training) but also the practice of human rights within the education system. The main responsibility for implementing the Plan of Action rests with the ministry of education in each country, which should assign or strengthen a department or unit responsible for coordinating the development of a related national strategy, in close cooperation with all relevant actors. Member States are also encouraged to identify and support a resource centre for collecting and disseminating related initiatives and information (good practices from diverse contexts and countries, educational materials, events).

3. On 11 August 2005, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights adopted resolution 2005/26 welcoming the adoption of the Plan of Action and encouraging all States to develop initiatives within the World Programme. The Sub-Commission recommended that human rights treaty bodies, when examining reports of States parties, devote attention specifically to human rights education in the framework of the World Programme and that human rights education be included as an item in the agenda of the annual meeting of the persons chairing the treaty bodies.

4. Since the adoption of the Plan of Action, OHCHR and UNESCO have carried out joint activities with a view to disseminating the Plan. In September 2005, they sent a joint message to an international human rights education electronic network.¹ In January 2006, the High Commissioner and the Director-General of UNESCO addressed personal letters to ministers of education to encourage implementation of the Plan of Action and offer assistance upon request; the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe has joined the High Commissioner and the Director-General of UNESCO in this undertaking as far as the 46 member States of the Council of Europe are concerned, given the important mandate of this organization in the area of education for human rights and democracy. OHCHR and UNESCO are also working on the publication of a joint booklet on the Plan of Action. Finally, OHCHR has responded to more than 500 related queries from governmental and non-governmental actors.

5. In addition, OHCHR contributed to the implementation of the World Programme and its Plan of Action by:²

(a) Facilitating information-sharing and networking among all actors through OHCHR's *Database on Human Rights Education and Training*, which provides information on relevant materials, institutions and programmes and is accessible through OHCHR's website (<http://www.unhchr.ch/hredu.nsf>) and the *Resource Collection on Human Rights Education and Training*, a specialized section of the OHCHR Library which includes a variety of human rights education and training materials and is open to the public. OHCHR also supported international and regional human rights education activities organized by other actors through provisions of grants, dissemination of publications, participation of specialized staff and other initiatives, as appropriate;

(b) Supporting national capacities for human rights education and training through technical cooperation projects undertaken within OHCHR's Programme of Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights. More information on these activities is available on OHCHR's website (<http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/coop/index.htm>). OHCHR devoted enhanced efforts to strengthening national capacities for human rights training of military and other staff deployed to peacekeeping operations. In close cooperation with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), it drafted a training manual on human rights for military observers and peacekeepers and conducted four regional training courses for trainers from national peacekeeping training centres in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe and North America to pilot the draft manual and to start enhancing the capacity of member States to provide human rights training. It also developed a training module on human rights for the integrated training of senior civilian, police and military management personnel of peacekeeping operations, as part of a DPKO project, and participated in three seminars organized by DPKO to disseminate the training module;

(c) Supporting grass-roots human rights education initiatives through the Assisting Communities Together (ACT) Project, a joint initiative of OHCHR and the United Nations Development Programme which provides small grants to national and local non-governmental organizations for the development of community-based human rights education and training projects. In November 2005, OHCHR and UNDP launched the fifth phase (2005-2007) of the ACT Project, focusing on supporting activities within the school system, in the following regions and countries:

- Africa (Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda);
- Arab region (Iraq, Yemen, Palestinian Authority);
- Asia-Pacific (Afghanistan, Indonesia, Mongolia, the Pacific region, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste);

- Europe and Central Asia (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine);
- Latin America and the Caribbean (Belize, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Uruguay);

More information on the ACT Project is available on OHCHR's website (<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/act.htm>);

(d) Developing a selected number of human rights training and education materials. In 2005, OHCHR issued the following materials as part of its Professional Training Series:

- *Human Rights and Prisons*, a human rights training package for prison officials (comprising a manual, a compilation of international human rights instruments, a trainer's guide and a pocketbook of standards);
- *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Handbook for National Human Rights Institutions*;
- *Human Rights: Handbook for Parliamentarians*, published jointly with the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Various language versions of the above-mentioned publications are under preparation to ensure their availability in the six official United Nations languages. More information on those and other OHCHR publications, including their electronic versions, is available on OHCHR's website (<http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/publications/index.htm>);

(e) Globally disseminating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. OHCHR maintained and developed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights page (<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/udhr.htm>) which comprises many resources on the Universal Declaration, including more than 300 national and local language versions. OHCHR also maintained and developed its Universal Declaration of Human Rights Collection, which includes more than 500 items on the Universal Declaration (printed and multimedia materials as well as a broad array of commemorative items), a selection of which is permanently displayed on the ground floor of OHCHR's headquarters in Geneva.

Notes

¹ The Human Rights Education listserv, which reaches out to over 3,500 human rights educators in approximately 160 countries (June 2005). For more information, see <http://www.hrea.org/lists/hr-education/>.

² More information on all these activities is available on OHCHR's website at the address: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/index.htm>.