

NGO Joint Statement on Human Rights Education and Learning

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International Federation of University Women; Women's World Summit Foundation; International Association for Religious Freedom; Pan Pacific Southeast Asian Women's Association; Organisation internationale pour le droit à l'éducation et la liberté d'enseignement

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ITEM 10: Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

This is a joint statement of NGOs.

Education is an entry point for individual human beings to develop their ability to understand what it means to be a good citizen and how to utilize their capacity to relate to their surroundings. One cannot however perform in a vacuum. Education and learning have to be exercised within a given context and a set of values which values are founded on respect for human life and human dignity and codified in the International Bill of Rights.

In pursuit of effective capacity building for human rights, we call on the Human Rights Council to promote human rights education in primary and secondary school curricula at national, regional and international levels as we prepare to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2008. This would help to ensure a learning environment where human rights and respect for human dignity are practised in daily life of the whole school community. It is at these levels where there is the need to promote also education for tolerance as a precondition for understanding and for implementing all human rights. Unfortunately, there is insufficient attention to the recommendations for capacity building on education for tolerance advocated by the "International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination" jointly sponsored by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the Government of Spain in November 2001.

It is also at the primary and secondary levels of education where the basic principles of gender equality and non-discrimination are the most effective entry point with regard to the understanding of the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We urge that the 60th anniversary will mark the advancement of human rights education and learning by remembering and honouring Eleanor Roosevelt as the then Chair of the Commission on Human Rights and all the drafters who brought the Magna Carta into the spirit of humanity of the Universal Declaration in 1948 and remains the heart and soul of it.

Finally, we join with the United Nations in the common commitment to uphold, promote and protect the human rights of every individual and to reinforce the learning of the provisions of the Universal Declaration.

Thank you Mr. President