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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development

Panel discussion on the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training: good practices, challenges and the way forward

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 42/7. It provides a summary of the high-level panel discussion on the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, held on 29 September 2021 during the forty-eighth session of the Council. It also contains conclusions drawn from the panel discussion in relation to strengthening human rights education and training for youth.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 66/137 of 19 December 2011, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, highlighting the fundamental importance of human rights education and training for the promotion, protection and effective realization of all human rights.
2. Pursuant to its resolution 42/7, the Human Rights Council convened at its forty-eighth session, on 29 September 2021, a high-level panel discussion entitled “The tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training: good practices, challenges and the way forward”.¹ In order to build synergies with relevant United Nations initiatives and in consultation with the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training,² the focus of the panel discussion was human rights education for youth.
3. The panel discussion was chaired by the President of the Human Rights Council, Nazahat Shameen Khan. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Assistant Director-General for Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, delivered statements to open the discussion. The panellists were the Minister for Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia, Simona Kustec; Commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, Gwendolyn Ll. Pimentel-Gana; Board member of Universidad Estatal a Distancia de Costa Rica, Vernor Muñoz Villalobos; and youth activism programme manager at the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation in South Africa, Irfaan Mangerera.
4. During the ensuing discussion, contributions were made by representatives of 22 States and the European Union, two human rights institutions and four non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

II. Summary of the opening statements

5. In her opening statement, the High Commissioner for Human Rights recalled that by adopting the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, Member States had delivered a strong message that human rights education and training were a priority for the international community and for all States. The Declaration reaffirmed the responsibility of States to promote and ensure human rights education and training and to create a safe and enabling environment for the engagement of all relevant actors, including educational institutions, civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and the private sector.
6. The High Commissioner stated that human rights education equipped individuals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that helped them identify, claim and defend human rights. It promoted critical thinking and offered solutions based on human rights values to global challenges, including discrimination and hate speech, poverty, conflict, violence, inequalities of all kinds and the triple environmental crisis of climate change, pollution and nature loss. It addressed the vital need to reset societies in order to combat and recover from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in sustainability and resilience.
7. The High Commissioner emphasized that the focus of the panel discussion on human rights education for youth was part of the growing emphasis at the United Nations on the contribution of young people to the realization of human rights. She drew attention to the United Nations youth strategy³ as well as the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2020–2024), which is dedicated to youth. She affirmed that access to human rights education at an age when individuals develop their values and begin to explore the meaning of membership in a community and society could have a significant

¹ See <https://media.un.org/asset/k1k/k1ku898bsy>.

² The Platform is a cross-regional group, consisting of Brazil, Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, the Philippines, Senegal, Slovenia and Thailand, which promotes human rights education and training issues at the Human Rights Council, including sponsoring related resolutions such as resolution 42/7.

³ “Youth 2030: Working with and for young people” (2018).

impact in shaping and strengthening their activism. She also said that many young people, equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes fostering respect, equality, justice and solidarity, were already taking action as a driving force, breaking barriers and leading the way in demanding institutional and policy change for a just and sustainable planet.

8. As youth empowerment policies and dedicated bodies were multiplying at the international, regional and national levels, the High Commissioner reiterated the key principle that young people must be the protagonists in developing policies and programmes that affect them. Beyond human rights education for youth, human rights education for, with and by youth should be promoted.

9. In her opening statement, the Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO emphasized that education went far beyond preparing individuals for the world of work; it must empower them with the skills, values and attitudes to respect human rights, improve well-being and shape more just societies. With 1.8 billion young people globally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, she underlined the pressing need to ensure that human rights education served as a tool to build more equitable, sustainable and inclusive societies and economies that were resilient in the face of crisis. She encouraged participants to seize the current opportunity to reimagine education and renew progress towards Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as countries endeavoured to build back better, with youth as central actors, not just beneficiaries. She encouraged the involvement of young people as full-fledged partners of the decisions that would impact them and their lives.

10. The Assistant Director-General also highlighted the work UNESCO was doing in the context of the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Working together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, UNESCO was supporting human rights education for youth in both formal and non-formal settings, with a view to promoting a shared sense of humanity, which was vital to solving global challenges and achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While affirming the strong commitment of UNESCO, she reiterated the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement across the whole of the United Nations in the area of human rights education for youth.

11. The Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth stated that human rights education and training were at the heart of the Secretary General's youth strategy, which laid out a road map for the United Nations and partners to work with and for young people. She referred to education "about", "through" and "for" human rights, as set out in the Declaration, reaffirming its importance in achieving a world in which the human rights of every young person were realized and recognizing young people's agency, resilience and positive contribution as agents of change. Nevertheless, the Envoy cautioned that young people were consistently sidelined from most decision-making processes that would determine whether the world broke down or broke through the current crises affecting their lives around the world, from the COVID-19 pandemic to the climate crisis and conflicts, to rising inequalities and discrimination. To address this, she highlighted the importance of deepening solidarity with the world's young people by ensuring meaningful, diverse and effective youth engagement in all areas at local, national, regional and global levels, including at the United Nations.

12. The Envoy recalled meeting with young people, both online and offline, and hearing from them that education was an area to which they attached the greatest importance. Young people were calling for universal, quality and relevant education, which was gender-transformative, inclusive, accelerated climate action and was based on human rights. She concluded by underlining the need to listen to and work with young people to ensure they receive quality education, as well as the critical importance of informal and peer-to-peer youth-led education to promote human rights.

III. Contributions of the panellists

13. The Minister for Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia affirmed the strong support of Slovenia for promoting respect for human rights through education and learning. She

emphasized the importance of commitment to and understanding of human rights to achieve security, equality and sustainability, especially in times of crisis such as the current pandemic. She also recognized that as an integral part of quality education, human rights education empowered young people to shape their reality and the future for an inclusive and sustainable society based on respect, appreciation of diversity and justice.

14. The Minister described how information and communication technologies were an opportunity to further human rights education in the world. As part of the Trio Presidency of the Council of the European Union,⁴ Slovenia had been advocating for enhancing digitalization and the use of artificial intelligence in education in a manner respectful of human rights and human dignity, as well as in line with the rules and responsibilities that ensured appropriate use. To this end, she emphasized the importance of providing equal access to digital education tools to all students and teachers. She commended the Council of Europe and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for their work in this area and encouraged States and international organizations to strengthen cooperation in promoting digital culture as part of human rights education.

15. In her contribution, the Commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines described the strategies that guided the Commission's work in its youth human rights education programme. The Commission had collaborated with the Department of Education to integrate human rights into the national curriculum and to publish a teaching manual on human rights education. It had provided training for relevant duty bearers on various topics, including bullying, sexual and gender-based violence and child protection, with a view to achieving better protection, respect and fulfilment of youth rights. It had also educated youth on human rights so that they could be more proactive in society; specific topics included the rights to mental health, participation and equal digital access. The Commissioner provided examples of the Commission's online human rights education activities, such as the Human Rights Academy and the Human Rights Historical Online Teaching Spot (HOT Spot), a virtual museum of the history of human rights in the Philippines. She also mentioned the use of social media in the human rights education work of the Commission.

16. The Commissioner highlighted the importance of a whole-of-society approach in human rights education. She stated that, although the Government remained the primary duty bearer of human rights obligations, the media, businesses, corporations and other non-traditional actors were needed to make human rights education a reality. As an example, the Commission had worked with amplifiers through the establishment of centres for human rights education to integrate human rights into school curricula and conduct outreach and research. With 60 centres nationwide, the Commission had managed to build a network of students who promoted human rights on campuses. It had also worked with faith-based and civil society organizations. The Commissioner concluded by stressing the importance of actively and democratically making young people human rights education partners.

17. The Board member of Universidad Estatal a Distancia de Costa Rica, Vernor Muñoz Villalobos, affirmed that the progress made in the previous 30 years towards access to formal education for children and youth had meant that there were more educated people today than ever before. Human rights education provided a solution to the world's chronic challenges, such as violence and environmental damage. Human rights education, in both formal and non-formal education, was fundamental for all human rights to be understood and practised in daily life and contributed to the prevention of violence and conflict and the promotion of sustainable development. Mr. Muñoz Villalobos stated that education must go beyond mere access to formal schooling; it involved the right to quality education and a broad range of life experience and learning processes that allowed children to develop personalities, talents and abilities and to live a full and satisfactory life within society, as stated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.⁵ For young people in particular, quality education should include

⁴ Slovenia, together with Germany and Portugal, forms part of the Trio Presidency of the Council of the European Union from 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2021.

⁵ Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 1 (2001).

learning aimed at achieving peaceful coexistence with others and meaningful participation in decision-making processes, something which was still to be achieved.

18. Mr. Muñoz Villalobos recommended paying particular attention to the environment in which educational processes took place. Human rights could only be learned through example and he defined as a conducive learning environment for human rights education one without discrimination on any grounds and paying particular attention to people in situations of exclusion or vulnerability. Everyone, including women, persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, were entitled to their rights and fundamental freedoms and should be able to participate actively in learning processes and make their voices heard. Mr. Muñoz Villalobos said that the pandemic had shown that what affected one person could affect all and that the best way to look after ourselves was to look after others, through learning and practising human rights as a way of life.

19. The panel concluded with the screening of a documentary about the human rights education work of the youth activism programme manager at the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation in South Africa, Irfaan Mangera. The documentary introduced the human rights context in South Africa, where racism remained prevalent – a legacy of apartheid that excluded people and separated people into different communities, as in the case of Mr. Mangera’s family. Young people continued to be excluded from the economy and from positions of power, leaving them unable to achieve the basic necessities for an adequate standard of living. In that context, Mr. Mangera, a young activist himself, underlined the importance for young people to grow as a generation that encouraged solidarity based on respect for human rights. He believed that human rights education was a necessary base from which all people could work towards developing a common understanding based on equality, justice and fairness.

20. The activities of the Foundation led by Mr. Mangera included anti-racism workshops using educational materials based on Ahmed Kathrada’s life lessons; historical tours that linked people to the past and created debates around current issues; and the creation of youth clubs across communities in South Africa, with a view to building a generation of people committed to change and development. As a result of this educational work, young people had started to organize themselves and to mobilize their peers for human rights; to campaign for access to education; to come together to protect people and their livelihoods against attacks from xenophobes; and to monitor and contribute to free and fair elections in South Africa. Human rights education provided a framework to empower young people to participate actively in society.

IV. Summary of the discussion

21. During the ensuing discussion, contributions were made by the representatives of Azerbaijan, Brazil (on behalf of the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training), Burkina Faso (on behalf of the Group of Francophone States), Cambodia, Costa Rica (on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay), the Dominican Republic, Egypt (on behalf of the Group of Arab States), Iraq, Israel, Libya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Nepal, the Niger, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Togo, the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as the European Union.

22. The High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation and a representative of the National Human Rights Commission of India contributed to the discussion.

23. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations also took the floor: Amnesty International (on behalf of Amnesty International and Soka Gakkai International), Center for Global Nonkilling, Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme and the World Jewish Congress.

A. General observations

24. Delegates welcomed the panel discussion and recognized that it presented an excellent opportunity to take stock of the achievements and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Declaration thus far, as well as identify opportunities and gain new perspectives for more effective implementation locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. Many delegates highlighted the contribution of human rights education to the realization of a universal culture of human rights and expressed the importance of guaranteeing the right to human rights education as referred to in the Declaration, which states that everyone has the right to know, seek and receive information on human rights and should have access to human rights education and training (art. 1 (1)).

25. Delegates affirmed that human rights education was a fundamental part of the right to education, as stipulated in various international human rights and education instruments and frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁶ They also recognized that the tenth anniversary of the Declaration coincided with a time when societies were facing enormous challenges in the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to education. Delegates urged Member States to continue working to ensure the right of all children to education without discrimination.

26. Delegates referred to the definition of human rights education as contained in article 2 of the Declaration, which refers to education about, through and for human rights. Human rights education should build knowledge and skills to uphold human rights and should also be conducted in a way that respected the rights of both educators and learners, based on the principles of equality, inclusivity and non-discrimination. In terms of methodology, some delegates stressed that human rights education and training efforts must employ participatory, experiential, gender-sensitive and contextualized methodologies, with special attention paid to learners in situations of vulnerability and exclusion. The need to build the capacity of educators and practitioners to support and respond to the specific learning needs of groups in such situations was also mentioned.

27. Delegates encouraged all sectors of society to participate in human rights education and training in line with article 3 of the Declaration, which stipulates that human rights education and training is a lifelong process that concerns all ages and all parts of society at all levels. Some delegates also took the opportunity to call on States and all relevant stakeholders to step up their efforts to ensure wider promotion and effective implementation of the Declaration.

B. Role of human rights education in tackling global challenges

28. Many delegates emphasized the importance of human rights education in addressing current global challenges, such as inequality, conflict, violent extremism, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. The current health crisis had brought with it multiple additional challenges. Beyond the immediate impacts on the right to health, education, employment and an adequate standard of living, the pandemic was causing a growing debt burden and threatening economic stagnation and decline, further adding to the economic disparities among and within States which, if left unaddressed, might result in new wars and internal conflicts. Human rights education was an effective strategy to tackle these challenges as it empowered people to analyse problems from a human rights perspective and seek responses and solutions based on human rights principles.

29. Hate speech, which had been exacerbated by the pandemic, also led to greater polarization in societies, thereby breeding extremism and threatening peace. The representative of the World Jewish Congress noted that the pandemic had brought about

⁶ Target 7 of Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education states: "By 2030 ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development."

challenges that particularly targeted religious and ethnic minorities. Rising anti-Semitism was undermining social cohesion, creating physical violence and causing psychological harm. It was therefore crucial to ensure that people were able to reject hate speech. To this end, as recognized by several delegates, human rights education served as a tool for people to combat discrimination and any forms of hate and to address harmful stereotypes and prejudices, paving the way towards a just, equitable and peaceful future.

C. Human rights education for youth

30. Many delegates stressed that young people played a key role in shaping the future. The number of young people today was the highest ever and 90 per cent of them lived in developing countries, where they made up a large proportion of the population. As an example, the delegate of Burkina Faso stated that young people accounted for 77 per cent of the country's population. Considering this, delegates agreed that young people were a major force that would contribute to realizing human rights and achieving sustainable development, and that a just, peaceful and sustainable society could not be achieved without the meaningful participation of all actors, especially youth. Globally, young people were the driving force for change and they had risen up demanding action to uphold human rights. At the same time, they continued to face challenges, from discrimination to arbitrary restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and association, to name but a few. In that context, delegates emphasized the importance of effective human rights education for young people to enable them to claim human rights; to build a generation committed to respecting and defending the rights of others; and to empower young people to participate in public affairs and democratic decision-making processes.

31. Mr. Mangera shared his experience of conducting human rights education work at the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, with a view to building a sense of community and solidarity among youth. He noted that educators were engaging youth by exposing them to historical sites where human rights violations had taken place, so that they could witness past injustice, rather than learning about it in a textbook. Through the programmes at the Foundation, young people organized locally to hold officials to account, safeguard people from xenophobic attacks, protect the environment, tackle discrimination and access mental health services, among other activities. Mr. Mangera emphasized that schools and communities had to become spaces where human rights education was developed for, with and by youth. He also stressed the importance of putting young people at the centre of the change process by giving them access to more spaces, more engagements and more decision-making processes. Meaningful civic participation by young people meant that their voices, actions and aspirations were heard and could be translated into effective change.

32. These views were echoed by delegates who affirmed that, to be effective, human rights education for youth must engage youth as leaders and key partners. The representative of Amnesty International stated that young people must lead the conception, design and implementation of human rights education programmes, focusing on addressing major human rights concerns, including those amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, which affected their lives and futures. Peer-to-peer learning must be encouraged as young people were the best placed to engage their peers, including those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability, and build on their diversity of experience. Leah C. Tanodra-Armamento from the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines highlighted the importance of empowering and engaging more young human rights educators. The delegate of the European Union noted that 2022 would mark the year of European youth, designed to empower those who dedicated themselves to others, including as young human rights educators and trainers.

33. A number of delegates also drew attention to the World Programme for Human Rights Education, especially its fourth phase for the period 2020–2024, which was dedicated to youth, as an important opportunity to scale up youth empowerment towards more inclusive, diverse and peaceful societies based on respect for human rights, and contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They encouraged Member States and all relevant stakeholders to strengthen implementation of the World Programme. The delegate of Brazil, speaking on behalf of the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training,

called for the support of Member States and other stakeholders for relevant resolutions to be presented between 2022 and 2024.

D. National human rights education and training

1. Plans, policies and related measures

34. Many delegates shared information about national strategies and policies for human rights education in their countries, some specifically targeting youth. In Burkina Faso, human rights education and training for youth was a strategic pillar of its current justice and human rights policy for the period 2018–2027. In order to implement the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, the Government had adopted a national plan of action on human rights education for the period 2020–2024. The plan of action provided for human rights education and training activities for a number of target groups, including youth organizations.

35. In Nepal, the ongoing fifth national human rights action plan for the period 2020–2025 had incorporated human rights education as an important component. Programmes were aimed at raising awareness of human rights issues, including harmful traditional practices, gender-based violence and discrimination based on caste or any other ground, and had targeted civil servants, teachers, law enforcement officials, security agencies, quasi-judicial bodies and youth, among others. In Morocco, the national action plan on democracy and human rights for the period 2018–2021 incorporated human rights education for youth as one of its objectives and set out specific action points to integrate human rights education into schools and universities. In that context, in February 2021 the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research and the National Human Rights Council had signed an agreement to enhance human rights activities in schools and universities.

36. Among other examples of national plans and related measures on human rights education and training, the homeland plan for the period 2019–2025 of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela included the promotion of human rights education at educational centres and universities. In Senegal, the Government had established a steering committee for human rights education, which had led to the development of a national action plan, which had been extended into a third phase of implementation. In Cambodia, the strategic education plan for the period 2019–2023 guaranteed inclusive, diverse and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all without discrimination. Mr. Muñoz Villalobos stressed the need for a focus on human rights, not only in policies concerning the educational system but also throughout other relevant public policies. He referred to the obligation of States to allocate resources for their education systems, ensuring that at least 4.6 per cent of gross domestic product was allocated to education. He underlined the importance of all policies being non-discriminatory and inclusive, thereby ensuring an enabling environment for human rights education. In that regard, he urged States to pay special attention to young people, women and persons with disabilities, among others, so that they could be fully involved and have meaningful roles in public service, particularly the education system.

2. Human rights education in formal settings

37. The delegates of Israel, Libya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Nepal, the Niger, Philippines and Slovenia, among others, reported that human rights education had been integrated into school curricula. The Minister for Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia stated that in her country human rights had been incorporated into various subjects, both directly, such as through civic education and history subjects, and indirectly, addressing human rights perspectives across the wide spectrum of school curricula. In the Philippines, legislative bills to deepen human rights education across primary, secondary and higher education were being discussed. In Mauritius, since 2016 human rights had been taught at schools for students with special needs.

38. A number of delegates spoke about the development of human rights education materials for schools, such as a pedagogical guide for human rights education in primary schools in Burkina Faso. In the Niger, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the

United Nations Development Programme and OHCHR, had produced and revised manuals for teachers on teaching human rights at schools. To ensure the accessibility of human rights materials, the State was also undertaking translation of all the relevant regional and international human rights instruments into the national languages.

39. In Azerbaijan, Mauritania, Nepal, the Russian Federation and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, human rights education was integrated into the curricula of universities. The delegates of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation mentioned cooperation with OHCHR in developing master's degree programmes on human rights at the universities in their respective countries. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2018, the Office of the Ombudsman had established the National School of Human Rights, a higher education institution specifically dedicated to human rights education, training, research and dissemination. The school was responsible for providing human rights education from both theoretical and practical perspectives, covering the relevance of human rights to daily life at the community and society levels, as well as to national and international realities.

3. Human rights education in non-formal settings

40. Some delegates provided examples of non-formal human rights education initiatives targeting various audiences. In line with its mandate, the National Human Rights Commission of India, in collaboration with governmental training institutions, universities and NGOs, regularly organized seminars, webinars, workshops and open-house discussions and funded research projects. It had also developed various human rights resources such as journals, handbooks, guidelines and newsletters.

41. The delegate of Egypt spoke about national initiatives that had been undertaken in the country, including dissemination programmes on the Arab Charter on Human Rights. The High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation had organized an annual "Open lesson on human rights" and since 2017, a total of 27 million school and university students, teachers and members of the general public had participated in it. In Mauritius, the National Human Rights Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology and the police, conducted regular awareness-raising activities to sensitize the public to human rights and human rights instruments.

4. Human rights training for professional audiences

42. Many delegates shared information on their human rights training programmes for civil servants, law enforcement officials, the military and other relevant stakeholders. The delegate of Saudi Arabia spoke about the memorandum of understanding signed in 2014 between the Government and OHCHR to develop national capacities for the protection and promotion of human rights. In that context, more than 85 training programmes and activities targeting judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and representatives of civil society organizations had been implemented. Many of those programmes and activities were focused on regional and international human rights instruments to which the State was a party and discussions were held on ways to strengthen their implementation. The delegate of Libya also provided an example of human rights training programmes conducted by the National Committee for International Humanitarian Law on international human rights and humanitarian laws in police academies and military colleges.

43. The delegate of the Philippines spoke about the United Nations joint programme on human rights in the Philippines, which had been launched in July 2021. The joint programme included the following key areas for capacity-building and technical cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights in the country: domestic investigative and accountability measures; data gathering on alleged police violations; civic space and engagement with civil society and the Commission on Human Rights; reporting and follow-up to human rights mechanisms; and human rights-based approaches to counter-terrorism and drug control. The delegate also emphasized that in those undertakings, the national human rights institution in the Philippines, the Commission on Human Rights, was a crucial partner given its constitutional mandate on research, education and information to enhance respect for the primacy of human rights in the country. The delegate of Nepal stated that the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal had been conducting human rights training programmes for government bodies, security agencies, human rights activists and other

stakeholders. Its strategic plan for the period 2015–2020 emphasized human rights education and training.

44. A number of delegates also mentioned the development of human rights education materials for specific audiences. As an example, in Burkina Faso, human rights education manuals had been developed for civil servants, the national police, the national gendarmerie and prison security guards, among others.

5. The use of digital tools for human rights education and training

45. Many delegates shared the experience of their countries in using technologies to promote and implement human rights education and training, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Togo, for instance, had undertaken a series of human rights education and training programmes based on information and communication technologies. In May 2021, the Government of Togo had launched an awareness campaign on digital citizenship targeting 1,600 influencers. It had also launched a “citizens challenge”, which invited young people to create artistic content about the rights and obligations listed in the Constitution. In Cambodia, the Government had created digital platforms for the general public to learn about human rights.

46. The delegate of the Dominican Republic spoke about the efforts made to ensure continued access to education for all levels, from elementary up to university, by introducing various online educational tools, platforms and resources, with special attention given to students and teachers in communities living in poverty. The delegate of Saudi Arabia drew attention to the memorandum of understanding concluded by the Human Rights Commission with the Ministry of Education in December 2017, with the aim of spreading the culture of human rights through education. Related activities included the launch of the educational portal “Watani protects my rights”, which aimed to familiarize students with human rights issues in an interactive way. In India, the National Human Rights Commission had developed an online course for students on human rights, accessible on the government e-learning platform.

47. Notwithstanding the opportunities presented by online education, some delegates cautioned about the related challenges, especially concerning the lack of universal access to technology. The representative of Amnesty International noted that millions of people who had no access to technology had been excluded from accessing education. To address such challenges, Ms. Tanodra-Armamento suggested that States undertake evidence-based studies on how to implement effective human rights education, especially considering that the pandemic had significantly changed the landscape of learning. Such an initiative could help design human rights education and training initiatives that were inclusive, accessible and available to everyone.

E. International and regional efforts to promote human rights education and training

48. Some delegates stressed the importance of regional and international efforts in promoting human rights education and training. As an example, the delegate of Senegal referred to Agenda 2040: Fostering an Africa Fit for Children, a vision that is integrated into Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want. Human rights education was included in the aspirations in Agenda 2040, whereby every child would benefit fully from quality education. The delegate of the European Union spoke about the establishment of the Global Campus of Human Rights, a global network of universities for education in human rights and democracy. The flagship project aimed to advance regional and global cooperation in human rights education.

49. Several delegates underlined the important role of regional institutions in promoting and implementing human rights education in the relevant regions. The delegate of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, drew attention to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South West Asia and the Arab Region in disseminating human rights standards in the region. In her concluding remarks, the Minister for Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia spoke about the special

role of the Council of Europe and the European Union in furthering human rights education in Europe.

50. A number of delegates called for strengthened regional and international collaboration in the area of human rights education and training, guided by international human rights treaties and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. They also made specific mention of the role of international organizations, including OHCHR and UNESCO, in supporting Member States in this area, and called for enhanced cooperation.

V. Conclusions

51. Ten years after its adoption, the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training continues to provide important guidance for human rights education programming and processes. During the panel discussion, several delegates referred to article 2 that defines human rights education, beyond learning “about” human rights, as learning “through” human rights, namely in an environment and through processes where human rights are respected and practised, and “for” human rights, namely with a view to empowering learners to take action by exercising their human rights and respecting and upholding those of others. Participatory, experiential, gender-sensitive and contextualized methodologies, with special attention paid to learners in situations of vulnerability and exclusion, were particularly encouraged. Participants also referred to article 7 of the Declaration on the responsibility of States to promote and ensure human rights education and training and to create a safe and enabling environment for the engagement of all relevant actors. As well as traditional stakeholders, participants mentioned the media, businesses and corporations and faith organizations.

52. Delegates highlighted the importance of human rights education for youth, including in the context of the fourth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education for the period 2020–2024. They stressed that young people were agents of change and a driving force, breaking barriers and leading the way in demanding institutional and policy change for a more just and sustainable planet. Human rights education supported their meaningful, diverse and effective engagement, empowering them to demand, protect and promote human rights and to be active members of their communities and societies. Participants repeatedly mentioned the role of young people themselves as leaders and key partners in designing and conducting human rights education efforts, particularly as they were uniquely placed to engage their peers, including those in situations of exclusion or vulnerability, and could relate to their lives and experiences. Beyond human rights, education “for youth”, human rights education “for, with and by youth” was therefore encouraged, to take place in a safe and supportive environment where young learners could freely express themselves and where they would be given access to public spaces and decision-making processes.

53. The panel discussion provided an opportunity to review progress in the national implementation of human rights education and training, both in terms of policy and legislative development, as well as specific programming in formal and non-formal settings. Participants stressed the importance of pursuing regional and international cooperation in order to build on good practice and maximize resources, as well as forging new and effective partnerships and attracting investment.

54. A number of interventions concerned the increasing use of digital technology for education, and for human rights education specifically. Participants noted that the COVID-19 pandemic constituted a striking reminder of existing inequalities and of the consequences of those inequalities for human rights. During the crisis, many States and relevant stakeholders had shifted to online tools and methods to ensure continued access to education. Despite the potential of digital technology, participants warned that the digital divide could amplify inequality and discrimination; accordingly, equal access to technology for education in general, and human rights education in particular, needed to be achieved. It was suggested that States could undertake national evidence-based studies on the best way to continue delivering effective human rights education within

the constraints posed by the pandemic, with a view to supporting the design of activities that were inclusive, accessible and available to everyone.

55. A majority of participants highlighted the vital contribution of human rights education in addressing current global challenges, often exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as inequality and discrimination, conflict, violent extremism and hate speech, and the environmental crisis. The response to those challenges must focus on and uphold the dignity, equality and rights of everyone. Accordingly, human rights education was an essential strategy to tackle those challenges and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic in sustainability and resilience. It equipped individuals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to identify, claim and defend the human rights of all. At the same time, it nurtured a sense of the common humanity and equal dignity of all persons – an understanding that provided the foundation for living together in solidarity, sustained social cohesion and peace, promoted inclusion and participation and unlocked progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals while leaving no one behind.
