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**REQUESTS ADDRESSED TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE STEMMING
FROM HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS**

**Written statement* submitted by the Human Rights Education Associates (HREA),
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 July 2009]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

**The UN framework for human rights education and civil society participation:
Draft UN declaration on human rights education and training**

The evaluation of the Decade for Human Rights Education confirmed the essential role that NGO leadership and activities have played. NGOs actively carry out human rights education and training through non-formal programming, such as with youth in after-school and summer programming, but have also worked directly with state agencies, such as police academies and teacher training institutions, in developing their capacities to carry out human rights education. Almost anywhere a human rights education program is carried out, an NGO contribution is likely to be present or have influence. NGOs have demonstrated special expertise and commitment to human rights, and can assist duty bearers in carrying out their human rights education responsibilities.

Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) is an international NGO that has been working since 1996 to increase the capacity of stakeholders to carry out human rights education. Such work has been carried out collaboratively with Ministries of Education, Ministries of Justice, national human rights institutions, UN agencies, regional human rights institutions, universities and teacher training colleges, and international and national NGOs working in the human rights, humanitarian and development sectors.

The work of HREA demonstrates the richness of human rights education practice. HREA invites the Advisory Committee to visit its online library (www.hrea.org), which has more than 3,000 downloadable training materials. Each month the HREA website has over 50,000 visitors, with 3.3 million page views. HREA hosts a Global HRE listserv, which has over 6,000 members from 189 countries. Moreover, HREA's distance learning program, which began in 2002 with only two courses, has now expanded to 25 courses per year, with high demand.

NGOs carrying out human rights education have increased in number and often communicate and collaborate with one another, thus increasing the effective implementation of human rights education globally. Many regional human rights education networks have emerged over the past 15 years, some more active than others:

- Arab Human Rights Education Network [established in 2004]
- Asia-Pacific Human Rights Education Listserv [2003]
- Balkan Human Rights Network [2002]
- Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe Network (DARE) [2003]
- Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (Euromed) [1997]
- Human Security Network [1999]
- Red Interamericana de Educación en Derechos Humanos (educa-dh) [2001]
- Réseau Francophone sur l'Éducation en Droits Humains [2004]

We are at a time when human rights education practice is expanding and yet we need further recognition from stakeholders, as well as clarifications regarding what constitutes quality practice in relation to content, methodologies and indicators of effectiveness.

A joint NGO written statement was submitted to the Human Rights Council tenth session entitled the UN framework for human rights education and civil society participation (A/HRC/10/NGO/112). The statement reflected discussions among NGOs facilitated by the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) and HREA. The 365 signatories from 88 countries representing every continent included 56 organizations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and 309 organizations without consultative status, including 5 national human rights institutions.

HREA would like to present here the features of this written statement (A/HRC/10/NGO/112) that pertain to the drafting of the Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.

(1) Concept and Definition

The declaration, as a new international human rights standard, should provide a clear conceptualisation of human rights education. Currently, human rights education is interpreted as including human rights training. This point also must be clarified in the declaration.

The definition should not be formulated as a closed or exclusive meaning of human rights education. As international human rights law has already demonstrated, human rights concepts continue to develop. As human rights education encompasses all human rights, the definition in the declaration should remain non-exhaustive so that as specific human rights develop conceptually and new human rights are recognised, these also are comprehended within the definition of human rights education set forth in the declaration. The basis of the non-exhaustive definition and clear conceptualisation can build upon the provisions of many human rights instruments that are summarised in the OHCHR publication¹ and the “Context and definition of human rights education” described in the Plan of Action² for the first phase of the WPHRE (paras.1-6).

(2) Accountability / Duty-bearers and rights-holders

Over the course of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education and the WPHRE, the question of accountability has often been raised. The declaration should clarify the concept of duty-bearers and rights-holders regarding implementation of human rights education and training. In this context, it is also important to consider that the duty-bearer in a certain area of human rights may become the rights-holder in another area of human rights education or training. For example, members of the judiciary can be the duty-bearer in implementing the right to human rights education, but they themselves can also be the beneficiary of human rights education.

To date much emphasis has been placed on human rights education in formal education, especially primary and secondary education, in both practice and theory. This tendency is derived from States' obligations to provide for the right to education. Duty-bearers with responsibilities to guarantee or protect human rights, for example law enforcement officials and public servants, often are not beneficiaries of human rights education training programmes. The

¹ See, The UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) No.3 - The Right to Human Rights Education, OHCHR, 1999.

² A/59/525 Rev.1 / A/59/113B (2 March 2005) *Revised draft Plan of action for the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education*, paras.1-6.

declaration therefore should include references to international obligations that States have to train government personnel adequately in human rights, including the most recent human rights treaties and the protection of the most vulnerable groups. Given the special role of educators in carrying out human rights education in formal schooling and professional education, the declaration should encourage States to incorporate human rights education and training within all levels of teaching.

Human rights education has historically addressed rights-holders with the aim to educate them about their rights in order to empower them. Creative and effective methodologies in the nonformal and informal sectors, involving the most vulnerable groups and communities, as well as the general public, have been used and should be encouraged in the declaration.

A human rights-based framework should be part of all human rights education, schooling, learning and training.

(3) Monitoring system

To the maximum degree feasible, the declaration should provide for monitoring to ensure implementation by duty-bearers and rights-holders. Although there have been a number of commitments expressed by governments to human rights education as well as plans of action, the lack of an effective monitoring system has created difficulties for evaluating the implementation of human rights education. Effective evaluations are essential for validating and improving effective human rights education programming. In this respect, it is vitally important to explore linkages between the declaration and the WPHRE. For example, experiences gained within the WPHRE, including those from the NGO and higher education sectors, could be used to identify relevant and practical outcome indicators.

This would also be an opportunity to set and develop standards and practices in human rights education around the world by including benchmarks and indicators.

(4) Financial resources

The perennial inadequacy of financial resources has been a major obstacle for civil society in its efforts to promote and implement human rights education. The declaration should contain a provision of assurance of access to financial resources. It could, for example, stipulate the responsibility of governments to include human rights education and training in annual national budgetary planning. The declaration could also stipulate such a requisite responsibility within the UN system as a condition of international cooperation and assistance for implementation of the right to human rights education at the global level.

(5) The role of civil society and NGOs

Through all experiences and surveys of the UN Decade and the first phase of the WPHRE, it is evident that civil society actors and NGOs are the main contributors to the promotion and implementation of human rights education. This significant role must be clearly recognised in the declaration. It is also particularly important to take into account that many NGOs and other civil society actors have made various contributions and have special expertise in the field of human rights education in their respective countries but are not closely working with the United

Nations system. Many of them are not even in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. For drafting a truly meaningful United Nations declaration, their views and suggestions are indispensable in the drafting process. In this context, it is imperative that the importance of supporting their involvement and efforts toward the implementation of human rights education and training be clearly stated in the declaration.
