



**NGO WORKING GROUP
ON HUMAN RIGHTS
EDUCATION AND LEARNING**



REPORT

PANEL DISCUSSION

18 September, 2009

World Programme for Human Rights Education From the First Phase to the Second Phase

A meeting held in parallel to the 12th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Facilitated by

NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning

of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO), Geneva

Cosponsored by

The Platform for Human Rights Education and Training in the Human Rights Council

(Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, Philippines, Slovenia and Switzerland)

PANELLISTS

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MODERATOR

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THEME AND OBJECTIVE

Irene Martinetti

World Federation of UN Associations (WFUNA)

The Human Rights Council was to determine at the present session the focus of the second phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE). The objective of the Panel was to provide an overview of the transition from the first to the second phase and offer relevant information considering the next phase and its plan of action. Contributions of NGOs and the ways in which NGOs could assist Member States to implement the second phase was another objective.

The first phase of WPHRE had been launched on 1 January 2005 and focused on human rights education in primary and secondary school systems. The original duration of the first phase had been set for 3 years to be completed by 2007 and had been extended for 2 more years until the end of 2009. In the past six months in particular, there had been lively debates to identify the focus of the second phase and there had been contributions from stakeholders including States, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society organisations. To determine the focus of the second phase of the WPHRE, there would be a draft resolution prepared by the Platform, for which consultation was led by Costa Rica.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Petra Ticha

Methodology, Education and Training Unit, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ticha provided the background of the WPHRE and the substantial elements extracted from the High Commissioner's report on consultation on the second phase of the WPHRE (A/HRC/12/36 of 20 August 2009). The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had called upon stakeholders for submission of their proposals and comments on the possible directions of the second phase of the WPHRE. The High Commissioner's report was based on the submissions that had been received. .

Ticha mentioned the WPHRE was a global initiative which aimed to provide a common sense of purposes, goals, and action as well as an incentive to enhance human rights education around the world. She explained that it was structured in consecutive phases with the purpose to advance human rights education in all sectors. She indicated the emphasis of WPHRE on national level action, for which the main responsibility rested with the ministries of education in cooperation with other relevant actors to implement the first phase.

Ticha explained the consultation process and the results that had been summarised in the High Commissioner's report.

Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 10/3 of 25 March, 2009, OHCHR called for written submissions from Member States and other stakeholders in order to determine the focus of the second phase of the WPHRE – to define either a specific sector or a theme. This call was sent to all stakeholders, also announced on OHCHR's website, as well as through the global online network of Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) connecting over 6,300 HREA subscribers.

A total of 59 responses were received - 17 from governments, 15 from NHRIs, 8 from international organisations, 16 from NGOs and 3 from individuals. The responses were of diverse length and showed a wide variety of different approaches, which as a result allowed for some general conclusions to be drawn.

16 respondents identified school systems as the target sector. The main trend expressed by these respondents was to continue focusing on schools and on primary and secondary school systems. Some respondents indicated the implementation of the first phase was insufficient, while some other respondents indicated the need for a thorough evaluation of the national implementation of the first phase before deciding on the focus of the second phase.

Most respondents highlighted the need for human rights education and training for the following actors in the second phase;

- 19 respondents: Civil servants - In-service training is necessary particularly for actors such as law and policymakers, government and ministry officials, parliamentarians, judges, law enforcement and military officers and health workers in-service training to reinforce their knowledge. They also assume responsibility as the duty-bearers for human rights education and training.
- 22 respondents: Teachers - It is essential to provide adequate preparation through teacher training in human rights to educators, trainers, leaders as well as staff of educational institutions and textbook authors. For this purpose, professional support is a prerequisite.
- 15 respondents: University or tertiary education sector respondents - Building the second phase logically upon the current focus on the primary and secondary education sector, several recommended the establishment of graduate human rights programmes and pointed to the important role of research in contributing to the development of innovative methodologies and tools for human rights education as well as monitoring or evaluation machinery for the WPHRE.
- Other possible target sectors include non-formal education sectors by extending the formal education sector, media, private and business sectors, the general public and specific groups of rights holders including vulnerable or marginalised groups.

With regard to possible thematic areas, some respondents stressed the need for a holistic approach to human rights education, bearing in mind universality and interdependence, while the majority made specific recommendations.

Concerning the duration of the second phase, proposals in the responses ranged between two and ten years, and five years seemed to be the majority view, with the possibility of extending the duration if necessary.

To conclude, she stated that the implementation of the first phase had yet to be accomplished in many countries and at the same time it was time to carry on with the purpose of the WPHRE, according to its structure of consecutive phases, to make progress in human rights education.

Alexandra Segura

Permanent Mission of Costa Rica (on behalf of the Platform)

Segura presented the main objective of the draft resolution to define the focus of the second phase, which would start on 1 January 2010. She explained that the High Commissioner's report A/HRC/12/36 of 20 August 2009 was the basis of the proposed focus of the second phase in the Platform's draft resolution.

She expressed the view that human rights education as implemented through the WPHRE should be seen as a lifelong process and as a contribution to the establishment of a more peaceful and tolerant society where human rights would be valued, respected and protected.

As for the structure of the consecutive phases of the WPHRE, she stated that different focuses, phase by phase, would contribute to the worldwide promotion of a culture of human rights and that Member States should work towards to the implementation of the current first phase, if they had not yet done so. In this regard, she referred to a particular paragraph of the prepared draft resolution, encouraging "*States that have not yet taken steps to incorporate human rights education in the primary and secondary school system to do so, in accordance with the Plan of Action of the first phase*" of the WPHRE.

She also reminded the participants that Member States should prepare their national evaluation reports on the first phase for submission by early 2010 to the UN Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System of the WPHRE (UNIACC). Based on these submissions the UNIACC would prepare and submit the report on the implementation of the first phase to the 65th session of the General Assembly in September 2010.

She referred to the draft resolution and the proposal that the second phase should focus “*on human rights education for higher education and on human rights training programmes for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel at all levels.*” She further added that the second phase should complement the first phase and that the duration of the second phase should be five years, from 2010-2014.

With regard to a plan of action for the second phase, she stated that in the draft resolution, the Human Rights Council would request OHCHR to prepare it in cooperation with UNESCO and other international organisations as well as NGOs, and submit it for consideration to the 15th session of the Human Rights Council.

To conclude, she expressed the commitment of the Platform that it would continue to promote human rights education and training, particularly in line with two initiatives: (i) definition of the second phase of the WPHRE including activity at this Panel Discussion, and (ii) the drafting of a UN declaration on human rights education and training for which the Advisory Committee of the Council (CAC) was in charge of preparing the first draft by the CAC session in January 2010, which would be submitted to the Human Rights Council session in March 2010 for further consideration.

Mahjoub El Haiba

Secretary General, Advisory Council on Human Rights of Morocco

El Haiba made a presentation in the context of the role of NHRIs for human rights education.

First, he briefly introduced the Advisory Council on Human Rights (CCDH) as the National Human Rights Institution of Morocco complying with the Paris Principles (General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993 on the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions) and its activities, stating that it would celebrate its 20th anniversary in May 2010 as one of the oldest human rights institutions in the African-Arab region. He stressed that NHRIs must cooperate with the UN system for human rights and must build a structure for ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights and that the CCDH was dedicated to such a process.

With regard to the WPHRE, he mentioned the continuous efforts of the CCDH to carry out and develop the national plan of action for implementing human rights education. He shared his views that the WPHRE must be implemented by the people themselves and that civil society actors and society as a whole should play the role of ensuring respect for human rights and the human dignity of all at all levels of society.

He also mentioned, as an example of their activities, a pilot committee created by CCDH in 2004 which had brought together different civil society actors, representatives of ministries and other national actors in the field of human rights.

He highlighted several aspects of human rights education and training, which CCDH had formally expressed and submitted to the CAC. He believed that this was relevant to the subject of the Panel.

Firstly, the definition of human rights education needs to be inherently linked to prevention of all forms of human rights violations and has to be linked to the right to education as well.

Secondly the definition should also address informal and non-formal teaching and training activities.

Thirdly, human rights education and training have to be placed at the very centre of media activities and multicultural education, and the general public should also be recognized as a key indicator that would allow us to evaluate the quality of education as a whole.

As for methodologies, he pointed to the need for special attention to be paid to the diversity of sectors in relation to challenges at different levels of schools, modern technologies, as well as culture and art. He also indicated the need for methodologies encouraging active participation, mobilizing personal experiences and avoiding indoctrination, in order to ensure proactive participation to allow involvement of various actors, provide a spirit of openness and eliminate intolerance. He also added that interdisciplinary

approaches must be taken which would widen the range of activity in the implementation process of human rights education.

Further, he pointed to the important role of research in the field of human rights in order to develop creativity in this sphere, sharing relevant elements of diverse cultures and their perceptions of positive values of human rights. At the same time, he emphasized that human rights education and training should not simply be a transfer of knowledge or values, but should promote the valuable nature of human rights, as positively acceptable and existing throughout the world.

In conclusion, he stated that NHRIs should ensure the future of the UN declaration and underlined that certain issues such as terrorism, issues over territorial borders worsening living conditions and poverty, should also be taken into account as they could threaten the implementation of human rights education.

Kazunari Fujii

Soka Gakkai International (SGI) / Chair of the NGO WG on HREL

Fujii presented six points.

First, regarding the WPHRE as a global policy framework with a plan of action, he briefly examined its structure. He pointed out that every country had specific needs and conditions for the realisation of human rights that might differ from those in other countries so that the WPHRE could at its best provide a set of guidelines or common standards and general principles with minimal actions that Member States would agree upon. He stressed that therefore a national plan of action was indispensable.

Second, he stated that the WPHRE was still in its initial stage and that education systems at all levels were yet to be given careful attention, including non-formal and informal education. For this reason, he expressed his support to the proposal, mentioned by Costa Rica on behalf of the Platform, that the proposed focus of the second phase should be *“on human rights education for higher education and on training programmes for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel at all levels.”*

Third, highlighting the human rights-based approach, he emphasized that the ultimate goal of human rights education should be the full realisation of human rights for all through building a universal culture of human rights in all countries and that in all phases of the WPHRE, the respective plans of action should stipulate vulnerable and marginalised populations for protection of their rights and participation by them in the implementation of human rights education.

Fourth, he raised a question as to how to maximise the potential of the WPHRE. Describing the WPHRE as not a legally-binding instrument such as a treaty, he suggested making best use of the WPHRE as a complementary policy framework at the global level and as a useful tool for human rights education in order to explore the possibility of raising the political will of States as far as this would help prevent human rights violations and promote respect for human rights.

Fifth, he highlighted two important actions in shifting to the second phase: (i) preparation of national evaluation reports of the first phase by all Member States, and (ii) maintaining and developing actions and initiatives taken during the first phase. Recalling the process at the former Commission on Human Rights, he reminded the participants that the WPHRE had been chosen and agreed by the Member States over the then possible option of a second UN decade. He explained that the intention with the WPHRE, unlike the UN Decade, was to enable each country to identify, as clearly and concretely as possible, objectives for implementation and indicators of effective evaluation by setting a specific focus during the period of each phase, which would help facilitate the identification of rights-holders and duty-bearers, as well.

Sixth and finally, he recommended 4-5 years for the second phase, for the reasons that there was no provision in any relevant UN document specifying a fixed duration of each phase and that if longer than five years, this might affect the motivation for human rights education in other sectors at the national level, while if shorter than four years, it would obviously be insufficient for implementation.

In conclusion, he called on all actors including States, NGOs and NHRIs to make efforts for two actions necessary for the second phase: (i) dissemination of information to increase public awareness of the WPHRE; and (ii) drafting a plan of action for the effective implementation of the second phase in all countries.

DISCUSSION

The keynote presentations were followed by an interactive discussion.

A question was raised as to how to ensure integration of human rights education in school systems and monitor its progress. In this regard, concerns over low levels of awareness of the WPHRE among school teachers were expressed.

Segura responded that although it was difficult to give a direct answer to the question, the second phase would help identify the related issues and provide human rights training for teachers, contributing to implementation of human rights education in primary and secondary schools and in line with the focus of the second phase on human rights education in higher education. She also added that the media and civil society had to play their key role in disseminating information for awareness raising on human rights education and training.

Fujii gave an example of a regional conference organised by the Council of Europe some years ago that he had taken part in, and indicated efforts and activities by teachers for human rights education. At the same time, he mentioned a misperception of human rights education by some teachers listening to an experience of a teacher at that regional conference on the WPHRE. He also referred to national procedures for modifying school curricula that could usually take a long time in many countries and several years in some countries in order to modify one subject.

Another question raised was whether Treaty Bodies had ever taken up human rights education in examination of States reports. A question on availability of any information on the implementation of human rights education at the national level in various countries was also asked.

Segura responded that the goal of the Platform was also to encourage other States to be proactive in the process of the Universal Periodic Review and Treaty Bodies to take actions with regard to human rights education and that NHRIs should also take such action.

Neal Gilmore, also working with the Methodology, Education and Training Unit (METU) of OHCHR, commented that it was indeed a challenge to ensure monitoring of the implementation of human rights education in school systems. In this respect, he introduced the online sources contained on OHCHR's website including information on national initiatives in which information on national plans of action for human rights education could also be found. He reported that numerous countries had reported on their progress in implementing the WPHRE in response to letters addressed to all Governments by the High Commissioner in 2007. As for the work of OHCHR, he clarified that ensuring integration of human rights education in the work of Treaty Bodies was ultimately up to members of Treaty Bodies, although the METU of OHCHR was working closely with colleagues in the Treaty Bodies Branch and with those working on the UPR to try to ensure that human rights education issues were included in the work of these monitoring mechanisms.

Roberto Vellano, from the Permanent Mission of Italy commented on the WPHRE with reference to the ongoing drafting process, following the Marrakech Seminar, of a UN declaration on human rights education and training. He mentioned the concept of human rights education as an integral part of the right to education that could be incorporated in the declaration. He indicated that one of the challenges in relation to human rights education was the lack of clarity over the concept of human rights education and that this had been a major factor in various approaches being taken in different names toward the same goals of human rights education. He stressed that this was also making it difficult to integrate relevant outcomes of the Human Rights Council into national mechanisms and institutions. While the substance of approaches, labelled in whatever name, was more important than their different labels as long as they would achieve implementation of human rights education, he emphasized that the labels should also be consistent and that efforts towards implementing human rights education should be coherent. He also added that the role of media and public information programmes were crucial and that the Universal Periodic Review process was a chance to follow up and highlight the implementation of the WPHRE.

Following the remarks of Italy, Anja Marija Ciraj from the Permanent Mission of Slovenia, commending the initiative for this Panel Discussion, expressed that she wished that the present meeting had been in a wider scale such as a forum so that it could have also been a great campaign to promote the WPHRE. She stated that efforts for human rights education were a good example of cooperation between States, NGOs and

NHRIs as well as all other relevant actors in the field of human rights, as had been the case at the Marrakech Seminar. She emphasized the importance of raising the political will of Member States to implement the WPHRE.

Difficulties over human rights education in Africa was expressed from the floor. At national level in Africa, while workshops could be the only means of capacity building of teachers and introduction of human rights or human rights education to schools, they had been hardly successful due to many obstacles in Africa. The question still remained as to how to realise human rights education in Africa.

Fujii responded by reference to the topic on Africa in the online discussion conducted by the HREA global network. There had been views and reports exchanged, and both positive and negative results, of efforts for human rights education in several African countries. He stated that according to the discussion, in some African countries a simple reference to human rights could be considered as being against the government, while in some other African countries human rights education had been integrated in school curricula and that specific needs and conditions at local and community levels and from country to country must be considered carefully. He added that therefore the WPHRE was also important to help national implementation by providing an international framework common to all countries and identifying common objectives.

El Haiba responded to the same question, stating that generalisations could not be made about African countries and that in several African countries at present there was recognisable dedication to human rights education and training. He mentioned Morocco in that it had been in the process of democratization and had demonstrated the courage to reflect on the past grave human rights violations in the country in order to make clear what had been unacceptable. Recalling his own student days, he shared his memories that neither teaching nor studying human rights had been allowed in the past even in relation to criminal law or international law. He emphasized that political will and democratization processes were the key factor in human rights education and promotion of human rights and that building national strategies for human rights was indispensable, pursuant to the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights.

(End of the Panel report)

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL 12TH SESSION

The following contents are supplements to follow up on the discussion reported above.

1. Substantive Session

During the 12th session (14 September - 2 October, 2009) of the UN Human Rights Council, human rights education and training were dealt with under Agenda Items 3 and 5.

As for the second phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights entitled "Consultation on the Focus of the Second Phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education" was made available.¹

The Platform for Human Rights Education and Training announced that Senegal had newly joined the Platform at the second informal meeting of Member States held by the Platform on 23 September for consultation on the draft resolution on the WPHRE which was open to the public including NGOs.

In the general debate on 18 September under Agenda Item 3, Slovenia on behalf of the Platform spoke at the plenary meeting of the Council. It referred to the draft resolution prepared by the lead of Costa Rica on behalf of the Platform, called upon all Member States and other stakeholders to support the proposed focus of the second phase of the WPHRE and emphasized that the WPHRE structured in consecutive phases could contribute in the short, medium and long terms, to the promotion of a worldwide culture of human rights, equality, prevention of conflicts and human rights violations, and enhancement of democratic processes.

¹ A/HRC/12/36 (20 August 2009)

Colombia, on behalf of the GRULAC (Group of Latin American and Caribbean States), under the same Agenda Item welcomed the proposal on the second phase of the WPHRE prepared by the Platform. It stressed the importance of continuous efforts to implement the first phase which the proposed focus of the second phase should also help to facilitate. It called upon all Member States to continue to develop initiatives for human rights education within the framework of the WPHRE and to contribute their input in the drafting process of a UN declaration on human rights education and training.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, as a post-conflict country, expressed its support to the proposed focus of the second phase and all kinds and means of promotion of human rights as a crucial factor to building a more just future for all citizens of all countries. It referred to its national efforts for teaching programmes in primary and secondary schools including human rights and democracy education, which were yet to overcome several challenges to full implementation with defined goals.

NGOs also took the floor with a joint statement of 13 organisations supporting the draft resolution prepared by the Platform. In the statement, the NGOs called upon the Member States to ensure: (i) maintenance and development of any activity initiated during each phase; (ii) a national plan of action to be prepared by each country; (iii) a vital role to be played by civil society actors in all Phases, and that establishing a voluntary fund for human rights education within the UN would substantially assist civil society in this area; and (iv) a national evaluation report of the first phase to be prepared by all Member States for which the respective Member State could be held accountable.

In the general debate on 28 September under Agenda Item 5, a few statements were made regarding the drafting process of a UN declaration on human rights education and training.

Morocco on behalf of the Platform briefly reported on the Marrakech Seminar held from 16-17 July in Morocco at which concrete elements for the drafting of the declaration were contributed by participants. Based on the outcome of the Marrakech Seminar and the ongoing drafting process, Morocco mentioned the need for a high level discussion at the 13th session of the Council (March 2010) in order to provide and confirm high level support to this initiative, stating that for this purpose the Platform would submit a draft decision to the current session of the Council.

Senegal, as the latest and a new Member State of the Platform, expressed its commitment to support the initiative of the Platform of the draft declaration. Senegal mentioned its view that the draft declaration should take into account inter alia issues on illiteracy, access to information technology, poverty reduction, and the gender dimension. It also mentioned the usefulness of scientific contributions from academic and university circles, parliaments and local communities, and the need for sharing good practices and financing for high quality education.

The Advisory Council on Human Rights of Morocco (National Human Rights Institution) emphasized that the declaration should be drafted with a strong definition of human rights education and training which would effectively raise awareness among people of their own rights and to the need to defend those of others. It also stated that the declaration should indicate the importance of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) as key actors and expressed the wish that human rights education and training would be considered by the declaration as a strong indicator of school education quality and as a determinant factor in the promotion of a culture of gender equality.

NGOs also took the floor on 30 September under the same Agenda Item, in a joint statement of 15 organisations. In the statement, the NGOs emphasized on the need for: (i) further consultation with stakeholders on the first draft before the March 2010 session of the Council; and (ii) an interactive dialogue on the first draft of the declaration during the High Level Segment of the March 2010 session of the Council.

2. Resolution on the World Programme for Human Rights Education ²

Costa Rica on behalf of the Platform introduced the draft resolution to the Council on 1 October, mentioning the support and impetus provided by NHRIs and NGOs. The draft resolution was cosponsored by 58 UN Member States by the day of adoption including those of the Platform (Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, Slovenia, Philippines, Senegal and Switzerland) which were the main sponsor of the draft resolution.

² Draft resolution number: A/HRC/10/L.9. The resolution will be officially numbered by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and be available on the website of the Human Rights Council 12th session later.
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/12session/documentation.htm>

From the first to the second phase

The resolution was adopted by consensus of the Council on 1 October, and it was thereby decided that the second phase of the WPHRE would focus “on human rights education for higher education and on human rights training programmes for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel at all levels” for five years, 2010-2014 (paras.2 and 4).

The Council also “Encourages States that have not yet taken steps to incorporate human rights education in the primary and secondary school system to do so, in accordance with the Plan of Action of the first phase of the World Programme” (para.3).

The Council requested the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to “prepare, within existing resources, in cooperation with relevant intergovernmental organizations, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and non-governmental actors, consult States on and submit for consideration to the 15th session of the Human Rights Council (September 2010), a plan of action for the second phase of the World Programme (2010-2014), (...)” (para.4).

The Council also reminded “Member States of the need to prepare and submit their national evaluation reports on the first phase” to the UN Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Human Rights Education in the School System of the WPHRE (UNIACC). Based on those reports, the UNIACC will prepare the report on the first phase for submission to the General Assembly sixty-fifth session in 2010 according to the plan of action of the first phase (paras.5 and 6).

Prior to its adoption, two informal meetings for consultation on the draft resolution were held on 17 and 23 September. While the proposed focus was well accepted, several delegates raised questions on (i) financial implications particularly in terms of preparation of a plan of action; and (ii) the relation between human rights education and the right to education. The question on financial implications was eventually formulated in the resolution as “(...) within existing resources, (...)” and so adopted. In respect of question (ii), the relevant paragraph contained in the very first draft, “(...) human rights education is widely considered as an integral part of the right to education (...)” was deleted at the first consultation meeting as this definition was questioned by several delegates and eventually considered irrelevant in this resolution.

3. Decision on the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training³

The draft decision was prepared by the Platform and was cosponsored by 63 UN Member States by the day of adoption including the 7 Member States of the Platform. Introducing the draft decision, Morocco on behalf of the Platform addressed the Council reminding Member States that the first draft of the declaration was to be prepared and submitted by the CAC to the 13th session of the Council to which end effective intergovernmental negotiation should be ensured. In order to facilitate such a negotiation by the Council, the draft decision was proposed by the Platform.

High level discussion on the first draft at the Human Rights Council session in March 2010

The decision was adopted by consensus of the Council on 1 October, by which the Council decided to “hold a high-level discussion on the draft declaration during its thirteenth session” (para.2) in March 2010. The first draft of the declaration will be the substantial material for the planned high-level discussion.

The NGO WG on HREL wishes that this report will be a useful tool to as many relevant actors as possible for the purpose of better strategy-building.

³ Draft decision number: A/HRC/10/L.11. As for the official document number, cf. n.2.

(Interns, Nicole Catenazzi of WFUNA and Marie Harding and Seon Hee Park of SGI, contributed to drafting this report.)