

MIDDELBURG DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

We, the participants in the 6th International Human Rights Education Conference, gathered in Middelburg from 17-19 December 2015.

Reaffirming the need for each girl, boy, woman and man to know their inalienable rights in order to be(come) active and responsible citizens in an ever globalizing world.

Recalling that article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Recalling that these aims of education were made legally binding through, among others, article 13(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 29(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and reaffirmed in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, and the Council of Europe Charter for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

Acknowledging the important role that education and training play in awareness raising and fostering a culture of human rights and democratic institutions based on the rule of law, as reaffirmed by the Council of Europe Charter on Education and Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, the United Nations Declarations on Human Rights Education and Training, and the ongoing World Programme for Human Rights Education.

Request the member states of the United Nations to continue to implement its international commitments and obligations under international human rights law and the World Programme for Human Rights Education, specifically human rights education and training for public officials –civil servants, law enforcement officials and armed forces– and educators in the formal schooling sector and higher education.

Urge the member states of the Council of Europe to continue to implement, and regularly assess, the Council of Europe Charter on Education and Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

Having learned that the Netherlands is considering its future curriculum for primary and secondary education.

Having learned that Dutch schools play relatively little attention to civic education, and have difficulties in designing such education.

Applaud the fact that the Advisory Body on the future of primary and secondary education in the Netherlands calls for more knowledge of the rule of law, democracy and human rights, and calls on the Dutch government to specifically set out clearer learning goals and teaching objectives.

Applaud the initiatives of the government to develop a method for trainee teachers to address human rights in the classroom, and to stimulate teachers to exchange experiences.

Applaud the resolve of the government to address education against radicalization as part of the Netherlands EU presidency, and

Call on the government to include clear learning goals and teaching objectives based upon international law and experience in educational laws, policies and curricula.

Call on the government to also formalize human rights education in the learning goals at all teacher training colleges.

Recommend that the government includes attention for both education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in its laws and policies.

Recommend that the government promotes an understanding of human rights education as an education that involves knowledge, attitudes and skills, and that can only be effective as part of a wider human rights culture in educational institutions.

Recommend that the government makes use of the experiences and insights on the pedagogics of human rights education gained worldwide.