

Human Rights Education in the Formal Educational System in Africa. *A Gender Issue*

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PREFACE

On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), a conference, "African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future" was organized. Under one of the conference themes, "Achieving good governance: The essential participation of women", a working group discussed "strategies and actions to protect women's rights and to eliminate the gap between the provisions of laws and practice". One strategy proposed was advocacy work through the school system.

The conference was organized by the African Centre for Women (ACW) which is spearheading the efforts of the ECA to assist its divisions as well as member States to mainstream a gender dimension, undertake gender analysis, and build capacity for African women's leadership. Prior to the conference the ACW had decided to undertake a study of human rights education within the formal educational system. The aim was to identify countries in which human rights concepts had been introduced into the curricula of the primary and secondary-level formal educational system. It was hoped that the survey would identify potential channels through which students and teachers could be sensitized about the rights of women.

ACW sent out letters to Ministries of Education and UNESCO National Commissions in African countries. Questions were posed on: Whether or not human rights issues or concepts were covered as a part of, or separate from, a Civics Education curriculum; whether NGOs were involved in human rights education initiatives in addition to, or instead of, the formal curriculum, and finally; whether specific obstacles were encountered or any innovative strategies were being tried.

Drawing on the responses received as well as other relevant information available, this paper will present examples of approaches to civic and human rights education being planned and implemented throughout Africa. It will also provide a list of information sources which can assist educators in developing or improving work in the area of human rights education. Proposals on teaching methods will also be made (see annexes). It is hoped that examples of approaches to human rights education being tried in various African States may serve to help other countries which wish to develop human rights education but lack the experience and ideas about effective approaches.

In 1988, to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a global campaign for human rights was launched. It was intended to promote awareness of and understanding by the public of human rights and fundamental freedoms, alert people to the international machinery available to all for the promotion and protection of human rights, and ultimately, to build a culture of full human rights for all people. The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration in 1998 again served to draw the attention of the international community to the need to enhance human rights education and related information activities throughout the world. In light of this commemoration, along with the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1999, the global campaign against violence against women, was launched in 1998. The year before, the African Decade for Education was launched by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). A unique opportunity for creating space for sharing experiences and strategies for incorporating human rights within the formal school curricula, has presented itself. It is hoped that this paper will help to raise awareness in Africa, of the potential role of schools in promoting rights and in shaping future policy makers and citizens.

INTRODUCTION

**Each woman, man and child, to realize their full human potential, must be made aware of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms
(UN General Assembly resolution 52/127)**

If people are not aware about universally recognized human rights, they are unlikely to fight for them or to pressure their governments to be accountable to those whom it governs. Similarly, if decision-makers and planners fail to recognize that respect for human rights is an essential foundation for sustainable development and lasting peace, the outlook for economic and social progress will be bleak.

It is now widely recognized that in order for development to be sustainable it must be people-centred and built on a foundation of good governance and the rule of law. One important aspect of developing effective policies which lead to social and economic progress is taking into account the ways in which men and women are affected differently by policies and programmes and how their priorities and needs differ. Another is making human rights enjoyment and the gender dimension cross-cutting issues in all phases of policy planning and implementation. Development is a process, which in its ultimate stage, brings about the complete realization of all human rights. A rights-based approach to development is based on the premise that development of a just society will only be achieved if human rights are respected and all people are enabled to reach their human potential.

Human rights education can play an important role in sensitizing people about the rights to which they are entitled from birth. Young people in particular can be made aware of how to effect positive change, work towards social justice and the inclusion of all people in development and strive for peace and tolerance.

Human rights education may be defined as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at building a universal culture of human rights by imparting knowledge and skills and moulding attitudes, which are directed towards, *inter alia*, the promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all groups. It enables all persons to participate effectively in a free society. Human rights can be promoted through three dimensions of education campaigns:

- (a) Knowledge: provision of information about human rights and mechanisms for their protection;
- (b) Values, beliefs and attitudes: promotion of a human rights culture through development of values, beliefs and attitudes which uphold human rights; and
- (c) Action: encouragement to take action to defend human rights and prevent human rights abuses.¹

In the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action² adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), human rights education, training and public information were stressed as being essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. The

¹ United Nations General Assembly resolution A/52/469/Add.1.

² In particular, section I, paragraph 33

conference reiterated article 26 of the Universal Declaration which calls on States to strive to eradicate illiteracy and direct education towards the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations General Assembly has noted that "human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive lifelong process by which people at all levels of development and in all societies learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect." States and institutions were called upon to include human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and rule of law as subjects in the curricula of all learning institutions in formal and non-formal settings."³ In addition, several human rights instruments contain articles that highlight the need to sensitize people about the type of rights being addressed.⁴

The focus of this study is the formal education system in Africa – specifically the elementary and secondary levels.⁵ As most countries strive to achieve the goal of universal primary education and to retain as many students as possible beyond that level, the role of formal education in helping young people to reach their potential as active participants in society is crucial. It is important to note however, that human rights education is being carried out within a wide range of settings – not only in schools, but also at informal and non-formal levels including within community-based development initiatives, the arts and the media. For instance non-governmental community based organizations and professional associations play a significant role in educating, sensitizing and disseminating information on human rights issues, particularly at the grass roots level and in rural areas.

In order for people to effect change and also benefit from progress, their basic rights must be respected as well as their social needs such as access to adequate education, health, housing and food must also be viewed from the perspective of rights. There is generally a high correlation between government commitment to social development and a high level of human development (as reflected in a UNDP-developed index which measures longevity, knowledge and access to basic resources that people need to develop their capabilities). Similarly, countries with the poorest standards of living tend to have poor records for promoting economic and social rights, gender equality and political participation for all.⁶ This paper makes a case for taking the rights-based approach and illustrates some ways in which this is being done.

In the United Nations General Assembly session following the World Conference on Human Rights, a resolution (49/184) was adopted proclaiming the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 1995 as the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. It was agreed by member States that the effectiveness of existing human rights education and public information activities would be enhanced by better co-ordination and co-operation at the national, regional and international levels. There a number of on-going initiatives within the United Nations system to raise public awareness on human rights. These include the World Public Information

³ United Nations General Assembly resolution 52/127 of 12 December 1997.

⁴ See for example, article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, article 7 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 10 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and paragraphs 78 to 82 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993)

⁵ While many universities in Africa include human rights education in specific programmes, since a small percentage of Africans reach that level of schooling, the tertiary level of education was not taken into consideration in this study.

⁶ For details on the human development index and measures of gender equality, see the Human Development Reports published by the United Nations Development Programme.

Campaign on Human Rights and a project of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) titled "Towards a Culture of Peace" (which incorporates human rights). In 1998 a review of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted five years earlier at the World Conference on Human Rights, coincided with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the UDHR.

The year 1999 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of CEDAW (which came into effect in 1981). The anniversary presents an opportunity for the international community to encourage States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so. In Africa, Mauritania, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Sudan and Swaziland have not yet ratified or acceded to the convention as of 5 December 1998.

CEDAW is unique in that it requires States parties to eliminate discrimination in private lives of people as well as in the public sphere, and this emphasis was brought about through the work of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Convention can serve as a tool for mainstreaming human rights and gender concerns in a range of development initiatives and understanding development issues from a rights perspective. Educators can also draw on such legal instruments to raise the awareness of students about the many areas in which all people have rights, such as education, health, marriage, employment and nationality.

The Platform of Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) spelt out specific ways in which the priority needs of women could be addressed. One critical area identified was "lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women". Since discrimination against women tends to be systemic in nature and strongly linked to the power imbalance between men and women, overall protection and promotion of human rights may not automatically lead to the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms and human rights of women equal to that of men. The Decade for Human Rights Education, the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in 1999, the twentieth anniversary of CEDAW, all present an opportunity to sensitize the general public to the rights of girls and women as human rights and the impact that disregard of women's rights has on the individual woman as well as the economic and social development of a country.

All Human Rights for All
(theme of the fiftieth anniversary of the UDHR)

I. BACKGROUND

A. Global consensus on human rights standards

Although 10 December 1948 was the day on which a Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, the concept of universal and specific types of rights has developed over a period of close to four thousand years. Examples can be found throughout the world. One of the oldest recognized human rights declarations was the Code of Hammurabi, from Babylonia, which dates to around 1750 B.C.E. Within the holy books of various religions, the concept of basic human rights is taught. In Islam, specific provisions for according women fair treatment in the case of divorce and limited inheritance rights are part of the religious doctrine. Around 551 - 479 B.C.E., the Chinese Philosopher Confucius, taught among other concepts, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." In Latin America, the Code of Nezahualcoyotl, was drawn up by the Aztecs around 1400. In Africa, many human rights concepts, the importance of harmonious relations as well as democratic traditions, were passed from generation to generation, in large part through oral tradition and social organization.

The broad variety of rights and freedoms can be classified to reflect the evolution of a global consensus. "First generation rights" or civil and political rights, as described in the United Nations Universal Declaration are:

- ◆ The right to life, liberty and security of person
- ◆ Freedom from slavery and servitude
- ◆ Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- ◆ Freedom of thought, conscience and religion as well as freedom of opinion and expression
- ◆ Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence
- ◆ Freedom of movement and the right of asylum
- ◆ The right to marry and found a family
- ◆ The right to own property
- ◆ Rights of association and assembly
- ◆ The right to take part in government and the right of equal access to public service
- ◆ The right to recognition as a person before the law; equal protection of the law; the right to an effective judicial remedy; freedom from arbitrary arrest; detention or exile; the right to a fair trial and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal; the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The freedoms listed above embody the traditional notion of "human rights". A broader definition of human rights incorporates "second generation rights" which refer to social, economic and cultural rights, including:

- ◆ The right to social security
- ◆ The right to work
- ◆ The right to rest and leisure
- ◆ The right to education

- ◆ The right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

The term “third generation rights” is sometimes used to refer to more recently debated concepts such as the right to development and to a healthy environment. At the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), reproductive rights were addressed and have become internationally recognized rights. Many of these rights are especially relevant for women.

In addition to these categories, the very concept of human rights points to an inherent tension between ‘individual’ versus ‘community’ rights. In its concluding articles, the Universal Declaration stresses the duties and responsibilities that each person owes to his or her community. For some societies an individual’s obligations to his or her community are sometimes given precedence while in other areas human rights are perceived as revolving primarily around the individual.⁷ In emphasizing collective rights, the challenge is to ensure that the rights of all groups are equally protected.

A growing global consensus on human rights is reflected in the numerous declarations and legal instruments adopted by the member States of the United Nations. The basic rights described in the Universal Declaration were put into a legally binding form through the adoption, in 1966, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (and the Optional Protocol) along with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights --the three components becoming known as the International Bill of Human Rights. Later, conventions on specific groups and issues were adopted. These include a Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, conventions dealing with Apartheid and one against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Some International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions such as Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, and Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities, which deal specifically with gender, were adopted in the 1950s.

As is reflected in the wording of the basic rights identified in the Declaration, rights are expressed in terms of “freedoms from” as well as “rights to” (or negative and positive obligations). For example, freedom from fear, violence or hunger is just as important as the right to education, health or development. The notions of the right to development and the need for a new international economic order evolved from these rights and have often been debated in the last two decades. Since the 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in particular, has focussed on development in terms of rights and “good governance” and has committed itself to mainstream human rights in its activities. In one of its policy papers, UNDP stresses the “mutual dependency and complementarity of sustainable human development and social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights.”⁸ It is also worth noting that at the Habitat II conference (Istanbul, 1996), governments committed

⁷ Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, a Malaysian political scientist and former political detainee, for example, explains how there is in Asia and Africa in particular, there is a strong notion of the rights of the collectivity, the community, the nation. “This has a lot to do with the colonial experience of Asian and African states. Subjected to alien colonial rule for centuries, fighting for freedom for whole generations of Asians and Africans came to mean fighting for the freedom of their people.” (Source: Impact, Asia Magazine for Human Transformation Vol.28, No. 2-3, Feb-March 1993)

⁸ United Nations Development Programme, “Integrating Human Rights with Sustainable Human Development.” A UNDP Policy Document, New York, NY, January 1998.

themselves to the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing. It follows, therefore, that a policy of arbitrary, forced eviction can be treated as a violation of the right to adequate housing.

At other international conferences, the enjoyment of one's right to health, education and freedom from hunger have been stressed as a necessary prerequisite for sustainable development. For less developed countries, arguing for justice in international fora on the basis of rights can help to bring attention to what is at stake for their populations (for instance the dumping of hazardous wastes, rights of migrant workers and their families, and the right to development).

B. Human Rights in Africa

In various regions of the world steps are being taken to address specific human rights issues that affect women in particular. Latin America has an Inter-American Convention on the Eradication of Violence against Women (the Convention of Belem do Para) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cupertino (SAARC) adopted a Convention on Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children at its Ministerial meeting in July 1998 which is to be adopted at the SAARC Summit in 1999.

"There is no single model of democracy, or of human rights or of cultural expression for all the world. But for all the world, there must be democracy, human rights and free cultural expression"
Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General

With few independent countries in Africa in 1948, the continent did not have a strong voice in the formulation of the UDHR. Over the years however, Africa has presented an increasingly unified voice on human rights standards. While issues may vary considerably at the sub-regional or national level, many human rights issues have long been seen as being universal and were also a major concern for groups that fought against colonial rule and apartheid. African States have agreed on the human rights standards, as spelt out in the African Charter of People's and Human Rights adopted in 1981, and which entered into force on 21 October 1986. Other instruments and declarations that address human rights have been adopted by the OAU.⁹

As of January 1999, all African States with the exception of Eritrea had ratified or acceded to the African Charter. The African Charter emphasizes the rights of individuals as well as groups and also specifies the responsibilities and duties which people and governments are expected to undertake. As has been the case with Asia, the duties of citizens are emphasized. Although it does not specifically address rights concerning women, article 18 stipulates that "the State shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of the woman and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions". Under article 62 of the African Charter, each State party undertook to submit a report every two years, on the legislative and other measures it is taking to give effect to the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Charter. Human rights education also falls under the obligations by the States parties to the Charter.

⁹ See for example: the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics (1990) and the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (1990); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, (1990); and the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, 1001 U.N.T.S. 45, entered into force June 20, 1974.

The African Charter reflects a holistic approach to human rights. It incorporates civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as well as developmental and environmental rights. All of these groups of rights are subject to the same communications procedure and are treated on an equal footing and as indivisible and interdependent.

(Expert Group Meeting on "Promoting Women's Enjoyment of their Economic and Social Rights" (Finland, Dec. 1997)

African States also recognize the need to take steps to help improve the status of African women. A Special Rapporteur on women's rights was appointed by the Commission on People's and Human Rights and an optional Protocol dealing with rights specifically affecting women is being drafted by the Commission.

An important, though often unmentioned, human rights issue affecting women throughout Africa, is citizenship.¹⁰ The legal system in some African States regards women as minors for their entire lives while more common are problems associated with *jus sanguinis* whereby the father's citizenship determines that of his children. As a result, a husband or child often cannot take on the citizenship of the wife or mother. Moreover, a woman may lose her citizenship by marrying a foreigner.¹¹ In such circumstances, a woman may divorce and live in her own country with children, none of whom are recognized as citizens of their country of birth due to marriage with the national of another country. Laws of countries such as Botswana, Egypt, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe include such provisions, although it has been legally challenged in Botswana. Citizenship status affects a number of civic and political rights such as the right to vote.

The Commission on People's and Human Rights monitors the implementation of the legal instruments adopted by the OAU. It also plays an indirect educational role within Africa, as is evidenced from the types of issues addressed through the seminars and other activities that it organizes. These include; legal assistance and fair trial, popular participation and non-formal education, human rights in the new South Africa, contemporary forms of slavery in Africa, the peaceful resolution of ethnic and social conflicts from a human rights perspective, the right to education, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, conditions of prisons in Africa and the problem of impunity in Africa.

A number of national NGOs have come into existence in Africa to raise awareness and support the protection of human rights, often through innovative community-level approaches. The number of organizations enjoying observer status with the Commission was 154 (in 1995). At the regional level, the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies located in Banjul, the Gambia, was established in 1989. The Centre researches various human rights issues, publishes studies and reports and also provides training to NGOs to strengthen their capacity to work effectively for the promotion of human rights in Africa.

In addition to organizations whose work centres on human rights, a number of organizations or associations have are addressing specific issues through a rights-based approach. In recent years, a number of countries have also established structures to deal with human rights. In Burundi, for example, a Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights has been

¹⁰ The denial of equal citizenship rights was the subject of the first prominent case taken up by the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

¹¹ Tomasevski, Katarina *Women and Human Rights*, 1993; Zed Books, London and New Jersey

established, and the Government has agreed to the establishment of independent associations for the protection and promotion of human rights. In Tunisia, human rights posts and units, offices have been established within the executive branch of government. A National Committee for Human Rights Education has been established and civic education for primary and secondary schools has been reformed and strengthened. The Department of Civic Education organizes teacher training and integrates human rights in the curricula of training for law enforcement agencies.

C. The gender dimension of human rights

"First, a broad understanding of how the systematic nature of gender-related discrimination creates significant barriers to women's enjoyment of their rights should be developed, so that the interpretation of treaty norms can be used to improve the situation of women throughout the world."¹²

The concept of equality, the need to highlight rights that are especially significant for women (such as nationality, political and reproductive rights) and to recognize the different ways in which men and women may be affected by the denial of their rights, is a fairly recent development. Even when the UDHR (and CRC) was formulated, the original wording used was "all men" -- only later revised to read "all people". In addition, certain assumptions made in definitions such as "right to work" and "right to an adequate standard of living" (articles 6,7 and 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) amount to a negative bias towards women. The impact of such biases can be significant, for instance in Africa, where the vast majority of women's work is unaccounted for, unremunerated and is carried out within the informal sector.

In spite of their negative impact on women (or other specific groups), many cultural practices are accepted as simply "the way things have always been" and are also perpetuated by those negatively affected. For instance, men and women alike often view various forms of violence against women as the norm. One of the first steps that should be taken to expose, and eventually eradicate, any type of discrimination or harmful traditional practice, is for people to recognize it as discriminatory or harmful.

The Fourth World Conference on Women addressed a broad range of issues and identified twelve critical areas of concern, or priority areas, in which conference participants agreed work was needed. Among critical areas identified -- all of which have at their core the issue of human rights -- the critical area "human rights of women" explicitly draws attention to obstacles, spells out necessary actions required and by whom they should be taken. It also stresses that "provision of human rights education is essential for promoting an understanding of the human rights of women, including knowledge of recourse mechanisms to redress violations of their rights" (para. 227).

As is explained in a recent publication of the International Centre for Research on Women, one dimension of human rights violations is that they often take on a different form for men and women. For example, both males and females may suffer slavery and involuntary servitude, but

¹² Daniel Whelan, *Recasting WID: A Human Rights Approach*, International Centre for Research on Women, Washington D.C., September 1998, page 10

females are more likely to suffer from *sexual* forms of slavery and, thereby, experience further violations of their human rights. A second dimension focuses on the gender-related circumstances which make it more likely that women will suffer disproportionately from a rights violation than men, based on established patterns of discrimination and "traditional" gender roles. Women for instance, represent a greater proportion of the informal labour force than do men, and as a result are less likely to enjoy the protection of legislation and policies guaranteeing their rights to safe working conditions, equal pay for equal work, an adequate standard of living, and social security.

A third gender-related aspect of human rights is that the consequences of violations can be gender-specific. For example, although both men and women may be subject to rape as a weapon of war, unmarried women who are raped may become pregnant, and this alone may make them "unfit" for marriage, while a married woman may be rejected by her husband. This can have devastating economic consequences in situations where women are economically dependent on men.

A final gender dimension is one which has received the most attention in recent years within projects and programmes aimed at promoting women's "legal rights", namely, that access to remedies is influenced by gender-related factors. This includes a lack of legal literacy and capacity to initiate legal action to redress a violation; community norms that discourage women from reporting violations; and the pervasive lack of sensitivity toward the needs of women by officials who are responsible for responding to violations.¹³

1. The evolution of a rights-based approach to gender issues

**Human rights education and information contribute to a concept of development consistent with the dignity of women and men of all ages that takes into account particularly vulnerable segments of society such as children, youth, older persons, indigenous people, minorities, rural and urban poor, migrant workers, refugees, persons with human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome... and disabled persons
(UN General Assembly resolution 52/127)**

In the last decade, several major conferences have been held at which the human rights of girls and women have been highlighted. At the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990), the need to meet the basic learning needs of people in order to ensure the exercise of human rights was discussed. At the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990), governments were encouraged to ratify and implement the CRC and to ensure equal rights for girls and women. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), governments were encouraged to ratify conventions related to women and to accord to women their human and civil rights. At the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), and in its Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, it was reaffirmed that, "the human rights of women and the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights." In the Beijing Platform for Action, it was also affirmed that, "the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls is a priority for Governments and the United Nations and is essential for the advancement of

¹³ op cit.

women.” Participants at the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) were encouraged to assist in raising women’s awareness and realization of their rights, and in promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Efforts to address gender equality within the United Nations have a much longer history, however. The Commission on the Status of Women -- a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council -- was instrumental in pushing through a Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1952, and later, other legally binding instruments. In 1957, the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women was adopted; in 1962, the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages was adopted; and in 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted. Global acceptance of the concept of codified child rights is also relatively new. The CRC was adopted in 1989 --thirty years after the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was adopted by the OAU in 1990. However, it has not yet entered into force. After international standards are defined, binding legal instruments drawn up, and people are made aware of their existence, practices often gradually come to be seen in a different light. In many cases however, governments have obligated themselves to take measures to improve the status of women, while women themselves are often socialized to perpetuate the beliefs, practices and values which are regressive. Even if governments commit themselves to improving the status of women, protecting human rights, a critical mass in society at large, must see the merit in abandoning practices which are harmful to the girl child, respecting the rights of all people and so on.

Throughout history, the vast majority of societies have been patriarchal, as a consequence of which men typically have had better access to resources, and decision-making structures at all levels. While a majority of women are engaged in agricultural work -- in Africa, doing as much as 80% of all agricultural work -- they often do not inherit or control the resources on which they and their families depend. Lack of access to credit, education, health care (including contraceptives), to the same extent as men, has a clear detrimental effect on women’s lives and that of their families.

In recognition of the role women play in household food purchases and distribution, the World Food Programme (WFP) now targets approximately 60% of its development resources directly to women and involves them in the management of food distribution and in decision-making.¹⁴ The contribution of WFP to good governance focuses on capacity-building at the community level, in order to improve access of poor and crisis-affected households to food. The main means to this end is advocacy that the right to food is a fundamental human right, the achievement of which is closely linked to the empowerment of women.¹⁵

Identified obstacles to enabling women to exercise their rights in many countries include overly complex administrative procedures, lack of awareness within the judicial process and inadequate monitoring of violations, coupled with the under-representation of women in justice systems, insufficient information on existing rights and persistent attitudes and practices that perpetuate women’s *de facto* inequality. *De facto* inequality is also perpetuated by the lack of enforcement of, *inter alia*, family, civil, penal, labour and commercial laws or codes, or administrative rules and regulations intended to ensure women’s full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Platform for Action, para. 219).

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

The postulate for equality [has] moved far beyond the formal recognition of equal rights. It now entails the identification and elimination of multilayered gender discrimination: legal and factual, public and private, direct and indirect, visible and invisible, intentional and unintended. It also necessitates an understanding of the multiplicity of the grounds of discrimination affecting women: a woman may be subjected to discrimination because she is an asylum-seeker, disabled and a woman...

Women themselves are often socialized to believe that they should not have inheritance rights equal to those of men, that they should have their husbands' permission to work outside the home, that they do not have the right to be elected to office and so forth.¹⁶ The very concept of women's rights may also be in conflict with religious, cultural or societal norms. In such situations, promoting women's right to housing, health care and education results in improvement in their standard of living as well as overall status. For instance, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has persuaded Zimbabwe to eliminate school fees for elementary school students. This policy change is likely to have a positive impact on the girl-child, who is more likely than her brothers to be kept away from school when it becomes an unaffordable expense for the family. Ultimately, States have a duty to make it possible for all people to enjoy the rights to which they are entitled of which education is an important first step.¹⁷

2. Poverty, gender and human rights

In 1996, a General Assembly resolution was passed on "human rights and extreme poverty", an example of the growing tendency to analyze poverty and development from a human rights perspective. The United Nations' 1998 Annual Report on the Work of the Organization states: "We now recognize more clearly than ever the crucial linkages between poverty, bad governance and abuse of human rights, on the one hand, and violent conflict on the other. To reduce threats to human security we must focus more on their underlying causes than we have in the past..."¹⁸

The human rights dimension is now considered to be a cross-cutting issue and is expected to be reflected in all United Nations programmes and policies. In addition, treaty bodies have been requested to consider the issue of extreme poverty in their work, and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights recently appointed an independent expert to look into the linkage between extreme poverty and the promotion and protection of human rights. At an Expert Group Meeting organized by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, on "Promoting Women's Enjoyment of their Economic and Social Rights", (Abo/Turku Finland, 1997), it was suggested that the Inspection Panel created by the World Bank could become a forum for the consideration of complaints regarding the impact of World Bank activities on enjoyment of social and economic rights. In order to call for accountability however, the population concerned must be both aware of their rights and empowered to assess the impact of various decision and policies on the enjoyment of their rights.

¹⁶ In a public opinion survey conducted by UNESCO from 1978-81 in Ecuador, Egypt, Mauritius and the Philippines, women frequently expressed disagreement with rights dealing with independence from and equality with one's husband. (cited in Tomasevski, Katrina, *Women and Human Rights*, 1993).

¹⁷ Even the act of becoming a member State of the United Nations, and as part of the process, agreeing to abide by the UN Charter, carries with it an obligation to promote and protect human rights and equality of men and women. This is regardless of specific human rights instruments to which a State may be party.

¹⁸ United Nations, "Partnerships for Global Community" Annual Report on the Work of the Organization, 1998, New York, NY 1998.

It must also be borne in mind that women experience poverty differently from men and for poverty to be reduced, women -- who constitute the majority of the poor -- must have access to decision-making structures as well as credit, and must be able to negotiate on economic issues. However, economic growth does not automatically bring about equality between the sexes, and can even reinforce pre-existing inequalities. Strategies are also needed to reduce other barriers. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), for example, helps to strengthen leadership skills of women in governmental and non-governmental arenas. It also trains women's organizations to monitor and promote the implementation of CEDAW and studies the impact of globalization and trade liberalization on women workers in Africa and other regions. Facilitating the participation of women in trade and investment activities and supporting women producers of cash crops to enable them to form cooperatives in order to increase their incomes and bargaining position in the international economy, are other initiatives of UNIFEM. In times of economic restructuring expenditure on the social sector is often reduced which especially affects the sectors that are crucial to women's wellbeing such as maternal and child health facilities and free education. Governments need to put in place 'pro-poor' policies and create an enabling environment for women to benefit from their work especially in agriculture and the informal sector.

"While 'human rights' are sometimes referred to, mistakenly, as one dimension of sustainable development, respect for social and economic rights, such as to education and health, as well as rights of gender equality, non-discrimination and environmental protection are now recognized as dimensions of human rights."¹⁹

3. Violence against women: A widespread denial of human rights

**"Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms... Any harmful aspect of certain traditional, customary or modern practices that violates the rights of women should be prohibited and eliminated and Governments should take urgent action to combat and eliminate all forms of violence against women in private and public life, whether perpetrated or tolerated by the State or private persons.
(Platform for Action, para 224)**

Although human rights theoretically apply to all people, there are ways in which girls and women are denied their rights simply because of their gender. For example, girls and women frequently experience violence from men. The participants at the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), voiced their deep concern about 'various forms of discrimination and violence, to which women continue to be exposed all over the world.' Violence committed by men against women is the cause of death for a high percentage of women in some countries. In Zimbabwe, domestic violence accounts for more than 60% of murder cases that go through the High Court in Harare (ZWRCN, 1995); a study of 73 homicide victims in metropolitan Cape Town found that over 50% of the victims had died at the hands of a partner or someone well-known to them (Graser, 1992).

¹⁹ Extracted from Professor Savitri Goonesekere's paper presented at the Workshop "Rights-based Approach to Women's Empowerment and Advancement and Gender Equality (5-7 October 1998, Rome, Italy); United Nations

The extent of violence against women in Eastern and Southern Africa

- In a detailed family planning survey of 733 women in Kisii District of Kenya, 42% reported being beaten regularly by their husbands (Raikes; 1990).
- Six out of ten Tanzanian women report being physically abused by their partners (Sheikh-Hashim & Gabba).
- More than 90 million African women and girls are victims of genital mutilation (Heise: 1994)
- In Kampala, almost half of 73 women responding to interviews on domestic violence reported being physically abused by a partner. Another 7 reported beatings by family members, another 5 of rape or assault by outsiders. (Wakabi and Mwesigye; 1991).
- In South Africa, an estimated one adult woman out of every six is assaulted by her partner. In at least 46% of these cases, the woman's children are also assaulted. (Tribune: 1991).

The position of women in relation to men in the society and the preference for sons over daughters encourages societal acceptance of the abuse of girls and women. As is explained in a publication focusing on Southern Africa, "Socialization plays an important role in shaping our expectations about how men and women should treat each other ... traditional hierarchical values often give men proprietary rights over women; with male family members having control over a single woman and her husband having control over her once she is married. Violence is also commonly condoned by communities as an acceptable way for a man to correct or reprimand his wife." In Botswana, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, the right of a man to chastise his wife as a correctional measure is enshrined in both common and customary law. Although in Zambia and South Africa the law does not officially permit such acts, many men still think that women are under their control, and that under certain circumstances, it is their right to beat their partners. In the same way, girls are taught from an early age that enduring violence is part of their role within marriage. For example, in Zimbabwe, the standard response to a woman who is subjected to violence in a marriage is "ndizvo zvinoita dzimba" (that is how marriage is). Traditional and cultural values that accept violence as a means of resolving conflict are also critical to shaping and perpetuating violent behaviour towards women."²⁰ Through the educational system, students can be socialized to some degree to reject violence. As stated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, "While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Because violence is one of the major ways in which women are denied their rights, it is crucial that it be addressed by schools, communities, policy makers, the police, the judiciary and health care systems. Although reaching young people during their formative years might be best, including human rights within training curricula for police and military is also important. Young men, husbands, police, soldiers and so forth can become agents for bringing about positive change in their societies, rather than perpetuating practices that have a negative impact on women and girls. Central African Republic, Chad, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda and South Africa are examples of African countries that have introduced human rights concepts in training

²⁰Susanna Osam, Charlotte Watts, Everjoice Win, compilers and editors. *The Private is Public: A Study of Violence against Women in Southern Africa*, 1995, WILDAF, Zimbabwe.

programmes for the police, military and/or justice personnel. In Malawi, standards for treatment of prisoners have also been disseminated to prison wardens.²¹

4. Women and armed conflict

The absence of peace, as a minimum, contributes to the violation of economic and social rights. While it is women who often ensure the survival of their families in emergency situations, the psychological scars that result from these experiences and abuse of human rights are given attention infrequently or ignored totally.

In African countries that have recently experienced armed conflict, the impact of rights violations on girls is becoming more widely acknowledged.²² In conflict situations, women are frequently raped, sexually mutilated, forced to become prostitutes, cooks and porters for an armed group and often, even those who survive, are rejected by the men of their own community as having caused their own predicament. Among refugees, women and girls are frequently raped while collecting firewood, water and food and mothers have seen their children die while food and medicines reach only combatants, during times of civil strife and armed conflicts.

A number of UN agencies and international organizations are trying to ensure that vulnerable groups enjoy their right to food, health and personal security. The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) pays specific attention to reaching women and children civilians with health, nutrition and education services in conflict situations, for instance in the recent conflicts in eastern Congo, southern Sudan and Sierra Leone.²³ The World Food Programme now has a policy of distributing food to women since the nutritional status of the family generally improves when women control distribution.

In 1864, the first international treaty governing the conduct of nations in times of war, and the first of four Geneva Conventions, codified after World War II, along with the Additional Protocols adopted in 1977, outlined ways in which prisoners, the wounded and sick should be cared for, and covered non-involvement and protection of civilians (with special consideration for pregnant women and children) in times of war, including internal conflict. This also marked the beginning of modern humanitarian and human rights law. In 1974, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict that addressed attacks and bombings of civilians and called on States involved in armed conflicts to "spare women and children from the ravages of war". The third Geneva Convention deals with the treatment of prisoners of war; and the fourth deals with the protection of civilians and non-combatants. Together, the four Geneva Conventions aim to ensure that human dignity is respected even during hostilities. However, in many recent conflicts as in Rwanda, women and girls have been mutilated, raped and forced into sexual servitude. In such countries education and awareness raising can be a way of bringing a better understanding of the impact of violence on all people and the need to work towards non-violent conflict resolution.

²¹ Sources of this information : For Chad, information provided to the High Commissioner for Human Rights; for others, reported activities of field offices of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

²² See for example, the Graca Machel study on the impact of armed conflict on children carried out on request of the UN General Assembly. She addresses the impact on girls and women, the need for education in emergency situations and the relevance and adequacy of human rights standards.

²³ United Nations, "Partnerships for Global Community", Annual Report on the Work of the Organization, New York 1998.

Gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation, including those resulting from cultural prejudice and international trafficking are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person, and must be eliminated. This can be achieved by legal measures and through national action and international cooperation in such fields as economic and social development, education, safe maternity and health care, and social support."

(Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, para 18)

D. Promoting a culture of peace and tolerance

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.

Article 26, paragraph 2, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

One of the ways in which people can be taught the importance to society, of respecting human rights is through "peace education" or educating for a culture of peace. When a culture of violence has developed, from the household level, through all levels of governance power is exercised through control, violence and the denial of rights. By teaching negotiation and conflict resolution skills, people can be taught to work towards a 'win-win' situation when they realize that respect for human rights and cultural,

religious and gender differences, does not result in a "loss" for anyone.

A growing number of NGOs and international institutions are working in the area of peace education. One role of UNESCO is to encourage and support in member States any activity designed to ensure the education of all for the advancement of justice, freedom, human rights and peace. One of the organization's guiding principles is that education should stress the inadmissibility of recourse to war for purposes of expansion, domination or aggression, or to the use of force and violence for purposes of repression, and should bring every person to understand and assume responsibility for the maintenance of peace.

UNESCO has developed an Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy. It is clear that conflicts -- and flows of refugees and displaced persons -- often result from human rights violations and insufficient attention to the relation between social justice, material wellbeing and peace. Poverty reduction combined with democratic forms of governance can go a long way towards preventing conflicts. In some cases, however, a culture of violence has developed which must be eliminated in order to achieve lasting peace. In countries where armed conflict -- especially involving civilians -- has been a way of life for several years, a foundation of respect for human rights must be created, developed and nurtured. This often involves training police and law enforcement officials, the judiciary and prison administrators²⁴. It may also include monitoring human rights violations and helping States to disarm and demobilize former combatants as a peace-building strategy such as has been tried in Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

²⁴ ACW has recently provided technical and advisory services for the development of a training programme for the Family Protection Units of the Ugandan Police Force. Special emphasis is being given to awareness raising about women's rights issues and interviewing techniques in cases of abuse and violence against women.

The central aim of human rights education is to promote understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among nations, indigenous peoples and ethnic, religious and linguistic groups.

In Angola, for example, the High Commissioner for Human Rights is providing assistance in human rights promotion and education in order to build a culture of respect for human rights and the rule of law. The Sierra Leone chapter of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has undertaken the 'Women and Culture of Peace' initiative which aims to involve women in conflict resolution.

One aspect of human rights education and the promotion of a culture of peace within the school system is to encourage greater tolerance of others and the development of non-violent ways of handling anger and frustration. Since a low level of tolerance tends to go hand in hand with violence, raising students' awareness of their own level of tolerance and the impact it can have is often incorporated into peace or human rights education. In this way, the root causes of many conflicts can be addressed. In the words of a child in Rwanda, "If we were taught in school and also by our parents at home to love, regardless of what tribe, then an end [to killings based on ethnicity] might be possible."²⁵

UNESCO has organized national consultations on the culture of peace in countries that have experienced civil war and conflict such as Burundi, Mali, Mozambique and Rwanda. In March 1997 in Mali, a Culture of Peace week was organized by the Government, UNDP and UNESCO. In April, a regional conference on promoting the values of tolerance and non-violence in Africa was held in Senegal and in September 1997, the Government of Mozambique hosted an International Conference on the Culture of Peace and Governance, attended by some 300 delegates from Africa, Asia, Europe and South America.

One of the objectives of this conference was to look at ways to bring into the peace process, those that are often excluded, namely women, demobilized soldiers and children. In Eritrea, human rights/moral and civic education is part of a new national policy and efforts are being made to introduce, at all levels, values such as a culture of democracy, peace and justice; as well as the importance of liberty and equality regardless of sex, age, religion, educational background or political orientation. The importance of democracy and the rule of law as a base for governance is stressed and recognition is given to the role of all citizens in nation building, reconstruction and social rehabilitation. Other contributions to "culture of peace" activities by UNESCO include the development of teaching materials on peace in Angola, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Tanzania.²⁶

Ethnic group-based violence in Africa is also being addressed by various organizations that teach tolerance and non-violent conflict resolution skills. Through the UNESCO Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, a project called ETHNO-NET has been developed. It is a pan-African network of researchers and decision-makers whose task is to study the underlying causes of ethnic violence in Africa and ways in which it can be prevented. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), together with the United Nations Department for Peace-keeping Operations, is playing an increasingly key role in assisting countries in the area of peace-building strategies. The Human Rights Field Office in Rwanda, in place since 1994, was the first of its kind to be run under the authority of the High Commissioner

²⁵ BBC World Service, Learning World March 1999

²⁶ Review of UNESCO's Activities in Africa (1996—1997), UNESCO, Paris 1997

for Human Rights. A field office was also set up in Malawi. In Angola, a Human Rights Division, involved in monitoring as well as educational activities, was set up under the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, established in July 1997. Focussing on a priority area of strengthening judicial institutions in Angola, it has worked closely with the Ministry of Justice on national seminars entitled "The Citizen and Justice". It has also assisted in the establishment of local human rights committees. In December 1996, the High Commission for Human Rights opened an office in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, through which it focuses its work on providing technical assistance in strengthening democratic institutions and on assisting NGOs and national institutions working for human rights. In all countries, educational systems are also national institutions that can play an important role in creating a culture of respect for the rights of all, and are generally in need of strengthening.

If harmful attitudes and beliefs are to change it makes sense to target young people. The school curriculum of Tunisia stands out for its emphasis on development of appreciation and understanding of various sources of influence in the world such as Islam, Arab and other cultures. With its large proportion of youth out of the total population, Africa has the potential to develop a new generation of leaders, parents and teachers who are sensitized about human rights concepts. As a UNESCO slogan puts it, "It is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

E. United Nations decade for human rights education: The role of governments

States have the duty to promote and teach respect for the rights and freedoms in this Charter. States must make sure their citizens understand the rights and freedoms as well as the obligations and duties of the Charter.

African Charter on Human and People's Rights, Article 25

Although the United Nations Charter, UDHR, the African Charter and other legal instruments spell out the obligation that States have to educate their citizens about human rights, specific strategies were suggested for the promotion of human rights education within the context of the Decade for Human Rights Education. During the Decade, broadly representative national committees for human

rights education, in accordance with national conditions, were to be established, if possible. They would review human rights initiatives within that country, co-ordinate activities and link with OHCHR and other UN Offices and Agencies such as UNESCO, ILO and UNICEF, in order to make use of technical assistance and advisory services as well as informational and training materials which they would prepare for the Decade. A national committee would also be responsible for the development of a comprehensive, effective and sustainable national plan of action for human rights education and information, which could draw on Guidelines developed by the United Nations with input from experts and practitioners in the field of human rights education from various geographical regions.²⁷

The national committee for human rights education was to be composed of representatives from parliament, in particular from the education, human rights and development committees and key representatives from civil society, including trade and professional unions, and from the judiciary, business community, teachers' associations or unions, and media. It was expected that an appropriate branch or agency of the government would form the national committee, which would then draw up the national action plan. The committee ideally would have links with

²⁷ Among African States, information was available indicating that the Government of Tunisia has set up a National Committee on Human Rights Education.

international and regional bodies as well as with the local and grass roots levels. It was also expected that the national committee, once set up, would arrange for a study on the state of human rights education to be carried out. The study would look at availability of key human rights documents in national and local languages as well as simplified language or visual formats; existence of legal norms concerning the promotion of human rights and their implementation; current activities of governmental and non-governmental agencies active in human rights education and existence of other relevant national action plans such as those for women, indigenous people or children. It was recommended that a study should also assess the access of marginalized groups to human rights education and allow for a bottom-up or participatory approach to inputs.²⁸

States were expected to draw up their own national plan of action. The Guidelines also set out minimum standards for human rights education and provided mechanisms for setting reasonable human rights education goals and measuring their achievement. A Trust Fund was to be established to help support activities and assistance provided during the Decade. Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were all encouraged to undertake human rights education and information initiatives in accordance with the Plan of Action and the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights as a contribution to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Further, a decision was taken by the United Nations Human Rights Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to place the question of the right to education, and in particular human rights education, on its agenda for the duration of the Decade.

Governments, NGOs, the United Nations and appropriate international organizations are expected to “promote education on the human and legal rights of women in school curricula at all levels of education and undertake public campaigns, including in the most widely used languages of the country...” Platform for Action (Strategic objective to achieve legal literacy)

Governments were also called upon, in accordance with their national conditions, to accord priority to the dissemination in their relevant national and local languages of the UDHR, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other human rights instruments, human rights materials and training manuals, as well as reports of States parties under the human rights treaties. They were also to provide information and education in those languages on the practical ways in which national and international institutions and procedures could be utilized to ensure the effective implementation of those instruments. The UDHR is available in several African languages. A listing is attached in annex II.

In the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, it is stated “Governments must not only refrain from violating the human rights of all women, but also must work actively to promote and protect these rights” (para 215). It also stressed the necessity of Governments and the UN to make it a priority to facilitate the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls as essential for the advancement of women (para 213).

²⁸ See United Nations General Assembly document A/52/469/Add.1, paras 35 to end.

The gap between the existence of rights and their effective enjoyment derives from a lack of commitment by Governments to promoting and protecting those rights and the failure of Governments to inform women and men alike about them. The lack of appropriate recourse mechanisms at the national and international levels, and inadequate resources at both levels, compound the problem
(Beijing Platform for Action, para 217).

Integrating the concept of human rights for all into school curricula and development policies does not have to involve substantial additional resources. Commitment, political will and awareness can go a long way. As the 1999 UNICEF State of the World's Children report (page 80) explains regarding spending on education, "The experience in particular of francophone Africa is illustrative. There, unit costs (per pupil and per graduate) remain among the highest in the world, and enrolment rates among the lowest." There are a number of examples of countries with higher per capita income producing poorer educational results than countries with considerably lower income levels.²⁹ Also, in some cases, simply modifying or eliminating laws which discriminate against specific groups of people and establishing mechanisms to strengthen women's ability to exercise rights guaranteed by CEDAW through rendering national laws non-discriminatory can create an enabling environment and foundation for positive change.

The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 52/127 of 12 December 1997 concerning the Decade, called upon international, regional and national NGOs and intergovernmental organizations -- in particular those concerned with women, labour, development, food, housing, education, health care and the environment, as well as all other social justice groups, human rights advocates, educators, religious organizations and the media -- to undertake specific activities of formal, non-formal and informal education, including cultural events, alone and in cooperation with OHCHR. The General Assembly also encouraged "the human rights treaty bodies to place emphasis, when examining reports of

States parties, on obligations of States parties in the area of human rights education and information and to reflect this emphasis in their concluding observations".

F. United Nations plan of action for human rights education

The United Nations has drawn up a Plan of Action for the Decade for Human Rights Education. It is designed around the idea of partnership among governments, NGOs, international organizations, professional associations and individuals. Objectives of the Plan include: educational materials development; building and strengthening human rights education programmes at the international, regional, national and local levels; assessing needs and formulating strategies. While member States do not have to abide by this Plan of Action, by being aware of mechanisms put in place, materials developed, availability of technical assistance and advisory services, (all being strengthened), governments can avail themselves of inputs which could help them to put strong programmes and initiatives in place.

²⁹ For example, as is reported in The State of the World's Children 1999, published by UNICEF, Vietnam has reached 94 per cent literacy while Pakistan with a much greater per capita income, languishes at 38 per cent.

National plans serve to enhance opportunities for cooperation in human rights activities among government agencies, NGOs, professional groups and other institutions of civil society as well as emphasize the role of human rights in national development. (A/52/469/Add.1) Among principles governing national action plans for human rights education are to:

- (a) Promote the independence, indivisibility and universality of human rights, including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights and the right to development;
- (b) Integrate women's rights as human rights in all aspects of the national plan;
- (c) Foster knowledge of and skills to use global, regional, national and local human rights instruments and mechanisms for the protection of human rights (note for example, CEDAW, which all but 6 African states have signed); and
- (d) Empower communities and individuals to identify their human rights needs and recognize the importance of human rights education for democracy, sustainable development, the rule of law, the environment and peace.

II. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN AFRICA

A. On-going initiatives and approaches

1. Child rights

In many countries, the Rights of the Child are introduced at the primary or secondary level, often through UNICEF support. Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), UNICEF has played an active role in promoting child rights through its programmes and advocacy work in areas such as protection of children during armed conflict, prevention of trafficking and child labour; promotion of education (with extra emphasis on the girl-child), improving child survival through improved nutrition, sanitation, and other health sector initiatives. Governments are also encouraged to approach education as a right. The method adopted by some UNICEF offices is to take articles of the CRC (as has been done for CEDAW in some countries, with UNESCO or other support) and to provide a simple description of what is required of States parties and/or show where the national Constitution is in line with such obligations or where gaps exist. An NGO, Federation Terres des Hommes, is publishing comic books for children as a way of informing youth about the child rights. By looking at issues which are especially relevant to the girl-child, a rights-based analysis can be developed into an improved understanding of human rights and women. For example, if girls in Africa had the same right to education, or were educated to the same level as boys, one could expect to see positive effects such as improved health and nutritional status of the family, lowered total fertility rate and later age at first marriage for girls – resulting in a reduced likelihood of maternal morbidity and mortality as well as improved ability to earn more money – which are strongly correlated. Educated women are also more likely to play a role in political and economic decision-making at community, regional and national levels.³⁰

It is also worth noting that the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (although not yet in effect), along with the CRC (article 2), which almost every country in the world has agreed to be bound by, requires States parties to remove any restrictions on the ability of a pregnant student to complete her education. Dropping out of school as a result of pregnancy permanently hinders a large number of African young women from reaching their academic potential. Girls are commonly expelled from school on the grounds of pregnancy (while the father of the child may continue his education). Such an issue could become the focus of advocacy efforts even among the students themselves if they were made aware of the relevant principle that has been agreed to (and is legally binding on) African States. This approach would not only convey the relevant approach but would also raise critical consciousness of human rights issues.

2. Teaching of rights with special relevance to girls and women³¹

Some of the countries that responded to the ACW questionnaire reported that the rights of the girl-child and of women are being taught in schools. In Burundi, for instance, one of the subjects covered in the eighth grade and thereafter is women's rights and gender stereotypes. Specific issues addressed include: identification of prejudices against women and gender inequality in Burundi and understanding the impact it has on women and on family life; the family code, and the importance of education for girls. In Tunisia students are taught about influential women in national, world, Islamic and Arab history.

³⁰ *The State of the World's Children 1999*, page 52 published by UNICEF, New York

³¹ More information on specific responses from different countries can be found in Annex 1

In a human rights education manual produced for schools in Central African Republic the rights of girls and women is the focus of one story which looks at domestic work and management of the household. It emphasizes the way in which girls are socialized to do considerably more work than boys which leaves them with no free time for play, rest or to attend school. Raising students' awareness of such issues conveys a message that all groups of people make valuable contributions to society and girls' education is as important as that of boys.

The subject of reproductive rights was specifically mentioned as being included in the curricula of the Seychelles and Zanzibar and Tanzania. Several countries also mentioned in their response that rights of the girl-child were implicitly, and in a few cases, explicitly taught. In the response from Mali, it was explained that while there is no specific focus on the rights of women and girls or of the child, the importance of these rights was acknowledged. There were plans to incorporate attention to such specific categories of human rights within the Civic Education curriculum in the context of the socio-cultural values of Malien society. In Togo, teaching about the rights of women and girls is not done explicitly but NGOs and associations hold talks and discussions on topics such as marriage, divorce, rights of succession and girls' education, often for village development groups.

In Madagascar, there is a lack of acceptance of the concept of "women's rights" and "children's rights" to the extent that they are viewed as 'destabilizing' to the society. But in Sierra Leone the Planned Parenthood Association is helping to promote family planning, responsible parenthood and reproductive health in schools. In Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) conducted a study on sexual harassment in schools which aimed at collecting data on behaviour and situations fostering sexual harassment so as to raise the awareness of students and enable them to avoid or deal with such situations.

A pattern of discrimination throughout the life cycle of a girl

Infancy: differential access to quality and quantity of food and medical care

Girl-child: genital mutilation, early marriage, sexual abuse, differential access to food, medical care and education, heavy workload

Adolescence: violence during courtship, economically coerced sex (e.g. For school fees), sexual abuse in the workplace, rape, sexual harassment, forced marriage

Reproductive ages: Physical, psychological and sexual abuse of women by intimate male partners and relatives; forced pregnancy (by partner or in situations of armed conflict); abuse of widows, including property grabbing and sexual cleansing rituals; rape, sexual abuse and harassment

Elderly: Abuse of widows, accusations of witchcraft, physical and psychological violence from younger family members and relatives; differential access to food and medical care

Source: *The Private is Public: A Study of Violence against Women in Southern Africa*, 1995, WiLDAF, Zimbabwe

3. Incorporating human rights concepts in the school curriculum³²

Socializing students to value women's roles and contribution to society: An example from Tunisia

Although it is not known to what extent these aspects are being covered in classrooms, Tunisia appears to have gone far in incorporating gender concerns within its school curricula. Attention is given to gender equality in rights and presenting a positive of women, valuing their roles as mothers, as well as teaching about women who left their mark in history and women and Islam. Specific subjects covered include: Non-discrimination and respect for women, mutual respect of men and women, the status of women and the attitude of men towards women, promotion of rights of women, participation of women, women and social change, constraints on development globally and the participation of women, ideological debates on the advancement of women and the relation between women and power.

Source: La Tunisie et les Droits de l'homme, by Fayza Kefi

In the process of gathering information for this study, it became clear that there are many approaches being tried and that the actors involved varied from country to country but there are also some commonalities. As is evidenced from the information provided, many States emphasize the duties and responsibilities that each person owes to his or her community, as described in the last articles of the UDHR and within the African Charter. Moral and civic education is typically used as a starting point for introducing human rights. For example, in Burkina Faso, content includes good citizenship at school and in society, the government structure and functions at local, regional and national levels; individual and social rights; and rights and duties under the Constitution. In Cape Verde, civic and moral education (which covers topics such as values and participation) is part of "personal and social training" which was introduced in secondary schools in 1994/95. The two other components of this training programme are vocational guidance and interpersonal relations (encompassing family and social life and psychosexual development).

Special attention is also given to the rights of the child. The Government of Central African Republic has produced a manual for secondary schools entitled "L'élève et les Droits de l'homme". It is divided into chapters covering the following topics: education, work, freedom, violence, justice and law, democracy. Each begins with a brief introduction of the significance of rights covered within the chapter and presents relevant articles from the UDHR, followed by short stories to present an issue and finally some questions for discussion. Specific issues addressed include: street children (showing their predicament and also that of their parents which caused them to abandon their children), daily labourers, strikes used as a means of changing unfair labour practices, slavery, political parties and elections. In some cases, a folktale or true story is presented to introduce an idea such as how people can pressure the government to change a policy or law, to illustrate the impact of unjust behaviour and so forth. However, it is not known to what extent this booklet has been made available to all secondary schools and if available, whether it is actually used.

The Department of Constitutional Affairs and the Parliament of South Africa are reportedly encouraging NGOs to assist with establishing formal human rights and democracy education programmes in the school curricula. NGOs such as Street Law and Democracy for All, among others, were negotiating with the National and Provincial Education Departments for

³² For more details, see Annex 1

human rights and democracy to be part of the formal school curricula.³³ A new curriculum which was to be finalized in 1997, had been divided into eight key learning areas, including "life orientation and human and social sciences" (comprising human rights, democracy, legal literacy and citizen education). Another South African NGO, Agisanang Domestic Abuse and Training, conducts educational campaigns in high schools that involve young men and women, educators and parents in addressing the problem of violence against women in dating relationships.³⁴

4. Obstacles and constraints

The inadequacy or complete absence of training in teaching a human rights curriculum stood out as a major constraint for most countries. Given that a degree of attitude and behaviour change would be expected from a human rights curriculum, a good pedagogical approach is especially important. In addition, the lack of basic teaching materials made it difficult for teachers or administrators to develop lessons, modules or curricula. Several countries seemed to feel very handicapped in this area. For example, Burkina Faso noted that teachers generally have no training in the subject matter and must use their personal initiative while in Senegal there is a plan for training teachers which is yet to be implemented. By contrast, Chad reported "human rights" has been integrated as a separate discipline in teacher training institutes for a long time

The need to assess the level of acceptance of human rights education by parents and the general public is crucial to planning an effective programme. A number of responses highlighted the need to sensitize and win the support of parents and also the community at large. An NGO from Kenya reported that attempts to introduce family life education -- which would empower young women with knowledge of their reproductive rights -- have met with serious opposition, mainly from politically influential church groups and conservative leaders in the government. In Madagascar, there was a lack of acceptance of the concept of "women's rights" and "children's rights" to the extent that they were viewed as 'destabilizing' to the society. Many parents and teachers were unsupportive of introducing human rights education in the schools although sensitization efforts had increased acceptance. In Mauritius resistance from parents was due to the perception that human rights was not a priority subject.³⁵

B. The way forward: recommendations

From the responses received it was not possible to assess the effectiveness of any specific approach. Some countries have an excellent curriculum at their disposal but lack training to make effective delivery possible. On the other hand, an especially creative, dynamic teacher might still be able to make a significant impact on students in spite of a lack of materials and training. If political will, commitment and genuine understanding are strong, it is possible to integrate human rights concepts into various lessons and subjects. Clearly, the task of developing innovative methods, materials and strategies for integrating a human rights education curriculum in school systems in Africa is very challenging.

It also appears that educators and curriculum designers are generally working in isolation from professionals in other countries and probably within their own countries as well. It is worth noting that some countries do have a ministry which is responsible for human rights. However, information regarding coordination among ministries and between the ministry of education and the ministry responsible for human rights was available only in the case of Morocco. The two

³³ Reported at the third African NGO Human Rights Education Workshop, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 1997.

³⁴ This NGO was awarded financial assistance through the UNIFEM Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women.

³⁵ Reported by a representative of Women's Action Watch at the third African NGO Human Rights Education Workshop held in January 1997, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

ministries have signed an agreement for the introduction of human rights education in schools and have developed human rights training and educational materials for teachers and students, training of teachers, authors of textbooks and curricula developers and other concerned school personnel in human rights standards. It is also interesting to note that Malawi has an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights and Democracy.

These types of approaches might serve as examples of good practices for other countries to emulate. It is also hoped that opportunities for sharing best practices, concerns, strategies and pedagogical approaches might be increased. Fortunately, there are several examples of NGOs acting in partnership with education officials without being viewed as threatening and adversarial. Additionally, African universities could be invited to work with government structures and the ministries of education to help develop appropriate techniques and materials for teaching human rights concepts at the primary and secondary levels, as well as to assist governments to comply with obligations to international human rights instruments. They may also be able to help the judicial system to harmonize religious, customary and modern laws to honour States' obligations as parties to conventions. NGOs and universities may also be able to help educators to better understand the complexities of many economic and social rights.

1. Awareness-raising

It is important for governments to agree to work together to eradicate practices which are harmful to women but it is also evident that through sensitization, men, women, law enforcement officials, parents, religious and traditional leaders and others, can become more aware of positive as well as negative aspects of their decisions and actions. Young people, as future parents, spouses, educators, policy-makers, police and soldiers, can become agents for bringing about positive change in their societies, rather than perpetuating practices that have a negative impact on others – particularly on women and girls. It is also incumbent upon States to foster the participation of the poorest and most marginalized peoples in the political, economic and social spheres. Through awareness raising and education in human rights, the potential of all members of society to help protect all fundamental rights and to strive for social justice is enhanced and civil society can be empowered to reject the abuse of rights. OHCHR and other organizations have undertaken major campaigns to sensitize and train

“Cultural relativism in the issue of human rights is I think, an issue which should be put to rest permanently. In fact, it should be considered a crime against humanity to try to excuse abuses of human rights on the platform of culture”
Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature

people working within the judicial system, the police and military, particularly in countries which have experienced conflicts or extreme repression. In many of these countries, government officials are being assisted to bring laws in line with international human rights standards and to fulfil reporting obligations required by various legal instruments.

There is also need to sensitise parents, teachers and community leaders (traditional, religious and other influential persons). One positive example comes from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. During the launch of the global campaign on violence against women, leaders of the five major religions in the country were in favour of speaking to their congregations about this issue. Making conventions, covenants and other relevant documents available in local languages, especially in simplified form, can help civil society to understand what the government has committed itself to do and help it to fulfil its obligations. When States party's reports are reviewed, it is also important for a cross section of society to be aware of what recommendations are so they can sustain efforts to improve the situation. For instance in 1992 when Tanzania reported on implementation of the Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations Human Rights Committee recommended some changes in the area of inheritance

and property rights. Similarly in 1994 the Committee recommended that Libya improve inheritance (and nationality) rights for women. If they were made aware of such recommendations, various groups of civil society - students, community leaders and various civil society and NGOs - solutions could be collectively discussed and agreed upon.

2. Policy issues

a) Ratification of CEDAW, CRC and removal of reservations

CEDAW requires States parties to take steps to ensure that discriminatory practices, regulations and laws are removed. In article 5, States Parties are required to “modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or stereotyped roles for men and women”. However, many States party to the Convention have added reservations, through which they have declared that specific articles will not apply to them. Some countries argue, for instance, that human rights is a ‘western’ concept, and that its promotion presents a threat to religious and cultural traditions. This argument is taken as constituting grounds for not taking necessary actions to ensure that women enjoy their rights as human beings (the rights of individuals -- women -- are deemed to be of lower priority than the predominant cultural expectations. On the other hand, to deny someone their rights in the name of culture constitutes discrimination and an abuse of cultural rights. The indivisibility and universality of human rights has been emphasized in numerous conventions, charters, and in the Vienna Declaration adopted in 1993. Governments must therefore find ways to balance attachments to practices that discriminate against a segment of the population, with their obligations under human rights agreements.

A major value of integrating development policy into a human rights framework is its potential to shift priorities in the political economy of resource allocation and distribution.³⁶

Laws that affect young people in particular, such as those dealing with female genital mutilation (FGM) or the minimum age for marriage, should be made widely known, both through the school system and as part of public awareness-raising campaigns. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has noted the relationship between high maternal mortality, FGM and early marriage in countries like Senegal and the Sudan. If young people are taught about the harmful impacts of such traditional practices, they may be in a stronger position to resist them.

Policy-makers in the area of education are in a position to shape the curriculum at various levels. They could take the opportunity to include human rights concepts within teacher training colleges as well as in the school curriculum at all levels. Equity is a central focus of people-centred sustainable development. The effect of governmental policies which follow a rights-based approach to development by addressing equity in access to education, in health, housing, productive resources including land, as well as political rights has been measured through indices developed by organizations such as UNDP.

³⁶ This idea was stressed in a workshop organized by the United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service and the International Service for Human Rights, on Globalization, Income Distribution and Human Rights, held in Geneva, 26 March 1998.

Looking at Africa, there are low-income countries such as Lesotho, Madagascar and the United Republic of Tanzania, which rank higher on the Human Development Index (HDI) – a measure including knowledge, longevity and a decent standard of living -- than Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, indicating that attention is being given to education, health care and other social services. On the other hand, the opposite situation is true for Angola, Mauritius, Senegal and Uganda, indicating that economic prosperity has not enabled the population to reach a higher standard of living commensurate with its economic performance.

As is stated in the 1998 Human Development Report (page 16), “Concern with economic growth as an end in itself continues to dominate policy choices...Human development has yet to enter into many aspects of policy-making and frameworks for action”.

3. Partnerships among governments, NGOs and the United Nations system

One of the ways in which the objectives set out for the Decade on Human Rights Education can be fulfilled in Africa, is through States and other actors defining a common strategy. In this area, guidelines prepared and disseminated by United Nations Agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, OHCHR and others dealing with specific issues such as the right to health, housing, education, and a healthy environment, can impact on formulation and implementation of national plans of action. They could strengthen the work of these organizations in providing technical assistance and advisory services to governments and thus enable countries to build their capacity to develop materials for use in primary and secondary level school and in teacher-training programmes. For instance in some countries educational materials have been prepared which highlight an article from CRC and/or CEDAW along side excerpts from the national constitution or laws that guarantee that specific right (for example concerning nationality, political participation etc.), in the country. In this way, students can learn how the laws of their country relate to internationally-agreed upon standards.³⁷

For the NGO community, workshops have often provided a means for actors throughout the continent to exchange ideas, information and experiences. The idea of organizing a series of workshops on human rights education was introduced in an International Commission of Jurists workshop held in November 1993 in Addis Ababa. It was endorsed by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights the following spring. In September 1994, the South African Lawyers for Human Rights hosted the first Human Rights Workshop for African NGOs. The workshop provided representatives of African NGOs from thirty-eight countries with an opportunity to meet and take stock of the challenge of human rights education in their respective countries as well as how best they could formulate the content and methodology of providing effective education in human rights. The second workshop was held in Cairo, Egypt in September 1995. It focused on effective strategies and methodologies for teaching human rights. From 13 through 17 January 1997, the third African NGO Human Rights Education Workshop was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, focusing on the challenge of developing innovative methods and techniques for human rights education in Africa, including the integration of human rights concepts into the formal educational system through the primary, secondary and post-secondary-level curricula as well as ways of educating adults in human rights.

It is evident that in many ways, NGOs have much more capacity than governments for sensitizing and educating people about their rights. Unfortunately, governmental and non-governmental initiatives are often not well coordinated. Some human rights and other NGOs

³⁷ For example, an organization, CREDIF, in Tunisia prepared such a booklet with assistance from UNESCO. In Mali, the UNICEF office undertook an analysis of the situation of mothers and children using a framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

have decades of experience in legal literacy and human rights education, often going back to periods preceding the current government in their respective countries. In many countries, NGOs could contribute their expertise to appropriate ministries if governments are open to such an approach. According to responses received, such partnerships are already in place in a number of countries.

In Burkina Faso, a new curriculum was developed for primary level education in 1989-90. It was reviewed in 1996 with input from a Burkinabe human rights NGO, le Mouvement Burkinabe des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (MBDHP). This organization has also launched a pilot programme at the primary and secondary level. The Ibn Batuta Association has trained fifty teachers as a contribution to human rights education, while l'Union Interfricaine des Droits de l'Homme convened a meeting of a committee of experts in October 1997 to design projects and programmes on human rights education at all levels of schooling. The government of Chad, stressed the fact that NGOs and civil society organizations are important actors in the area of human rights education and training, and that this sometimes compensates for the limited action of authorities. A positive contribution by States to human rights education could also be the elimination of obstacles to the creation of such organizations and associations. In that country, some human rights associations have organized sensitization campaigns for students.

In Kenya, for example, human rights groups and organizations such as FIDA (a women lawyers' association) are advocating for the inclusion of human rights as a subject of study in the formal educational system, as part of the current educational review. Human and women's rights groups have been able to spread awareness about these issues within schools. Also, FIDA is involved in the establishment of law clubs to spread legal awareness among school and college students as part of so called "extracurricular" activities, and frequently organizes talks and workshops in various schools and colleges throughout Kenya.

In countries such as Mali and Madagascar, NGOs are involved in the dissemination of information and sensitization work within communities. In Madagascar, a peer education approach is being used successfully to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS at the primary school level.

The Ministry of Education of Mauritius has set up a curriculum panel to revise materials to be used in schools for human values education and is working in close cooperation with a national NGO dealing with teacher training on this subject.³⁸ In Namibia, efforts are being made by NGOs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Culture to have concepts of human rights and democracy taught in the formal educational system. UNESCO is currently planning meetings to assist in addressing the issue. An NGO, the Legal Assistance Centre runs Legal Education Programme, where schools are visited and children are taught about their rights and responsibilities.

In Senegal, the Ministry of Education is working in partnership with human rights NGOs to harmonize their activities in areas such as training, while in the Republic of Seychelles, a large number of governmental and non-governmental organizations are concerned about the rights of the child and the reproductive rights of adolescents, working with the educational system.

The Planned Parenthood Association of Sierra Leone helps to promote family planning, responsible parenthood and reproductive health in the schools. NGOs play an important role, although not necessarily in the formal school system. The NGO ActionAid, for example,

³⁸ Reported in the report submitted by the Government of Mauritius and summarized in the 1996 report on the implementation of the Plan of Action for the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, submitted to the UN General Assembly by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

incorporates human welfare promotion in non-formal programmes, especially in Kambia District. The People's Educational Association (P.E.A.), an adult education association, also incorporates population, peace and human rights concepts in its curriculum for adult education classes.

In Togo, NGOs are involved in the organization of talks and discussions, often for village development groups. Topics covered include: democracy, marriage, divorce, rights of succession, girls' education, and the rights and duties of citizens in accordance with the Constitution. The Uganda Human Rights Commission responded that it is engaged in efforts to develop a syllabus including human rights concepts, for primary schools. This is being done in conjunction with the Civic Education Coordination Committee, a body chaired by the chairperson of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, and charged with harmonizing civic education programmes in Uganda. The Human Rights Commission also conducts civic education seminars. In Algeria, the National Observatory of Human Rights, which is made up of representatives of the public sector and members of associations was designated as the focal point for the Decade for Human Rights Education.

During the Third African NGO Human Rights Education Workshop held in January 1997 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, representatives from NGOs based in fifteen African countries reported on their work. In Nigeria, the Research and Resource Development Centre distributes teaching materials in private and government schools. It was also reported that human rights education had been introduced in some schools in Nigeria as "street law". Teaching was done informally -- typically during after school hours -- for about thirty minutes, and starting with basic human rights, rather than political rights. A representative of the Civil Liberty Committee in Malawi and NGO representatives from Kenya and Ghana reported that while there are no formal human rights education programmes, informal training is being undertaken in primary and secondary schools, including para-legal training in Kenya. In Ethiopia, NGOs conduct workshops on human rights and democracy for trainers who then undertake classroom teaching.

At its 20th Ordinary Session in March 1996, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights adopted a five-year plan of action to achieve the objectives of the African Charter, including the development of curricula on human rights education for primary and secondary schools. The United Nations system also has an important role to play in helping to build the capacity of NGOs and governments in the area of human rights education. In a number of African States such as Angola, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and South Africa, OHCHR has been helping to develop the capacity of civil society and non-governmental organizations to protect and promote human -- and legal -- rights. In addition to coordinating their efforts, United Nations agencies and programmes could, wherever feasible, work to ensure that assistance provided to the educational sector within country programmes address the removal of negative gender stereotypes and provide guidance on human rights education. Capacity building of NGOs and media such as radio could improve the impact of awareness raising.

In addition to providing human rights education, governments can complement their efforts by ensuring resources are channeled into meeting the basic economic and social rights of the population. In South Africa, for instance, issues such as housing, pensions, education and land are seen as essential elements in the struggle for human rights. In Nigeria and Zambia, movements for political change and respect for civil and political rights have been heavily influenced by the failure of the state to pay sufficient attention to economic and social rights.

Also important is the need to assess the human impact of any policy before its implementation.³⁹ In some African States, a gender analysis has been undertaken on national budgets and systems of accounts, which is an important step towards analyzing how men and women are affected differently by government expenditure. Since human rights issues are crosscutting, all sectors and all ministries need to be sensitized. In sectors such as agriculture, education, employment and health, development policies can be formulated in such a way as to target the economic and social rights of women. Gender-disaggregated data can highlight the causes of unequal enjoyment of rights by men and women.

It must be appreciated, however, that there are limitations in trying to reach the vast majority of African youth. Large numbers of children, especially girls, are not enrolled in schools or discontinue their education at a young age. Even under the best of circumstances where human rights are incorporated in the curriculum, teachers may be doubtful that young minds can understand such concepts. Annex IV provides examples of what would generally be appropriate to teach to students of various ages. NGOs and professional associations are often good sources of ideas about how to get specific types of information across to youth. Governments can play a role in encouraging men to participate in family planning and take responsibility for general family matters through such initiatives as awareness campaigns, institutional support and legislation in areas such as employment, access to land and inheritance.

Attention needs to be paid not only – or even primarily – to the introduction of human rights into formal educational curricula, but particularly to ways of reaching those whose formal education stops at an age before such concepts as 'rights', 'responsibilities', 'equality', and so on can have any real meaning to them. Non-formal programmes, aimed at a basic redefinition of the status of married women, at recognition of domestic labour as economy as economic activity, at a re-evaluation of the parental and domestic responsibilities of men, would improve the attitudinal environment which currently militates against the practice of equal rights within the family.

(M. Gallagher, *Becoming Aware: Human Rights and the Family*, Paris, UNESCO)

Professor Sivitri Goonesekere explains that although there is often agreement that women and men should have equal opportunity in life, “through policies and programmes that focus on poverty alleviation, equal access to health and education and opportunities for self employment, access to credit and economic empowerment, ...there is an unwillingness to adopt a holistic approach to infringement of bodily security and gender-based discrimination in a society, or to address complex problems in regard to gender roles and relationships and their impact in imposing disadvantages upon women because of their sex.”⁴⁰

Women play a key role in educating and socializing their children. As a first step, they should bring up their daughters to believe that they are worthy of having the same human rights as boys. Ultimately, the interdependence of all people and the positive effect of respecting each others' rights must be recognized. Even marginalized groups can reach the point of believing that their rights do not need to be sacrificed for the benefit of those with more power.

³⁹ Some of these points were raised in a study entitled “The Status of Human Rights Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa” accessed through the web site of the University of Minnesota Human Rights Center (1998).

⁴⁰ Savitri Goonesekere in Op. cit

III. CONCLUSION

Over the last fifty years, the world has taken great strides towards achieving universal recognition of human rights with particularly rapid progress being made in the last five years. Agreement has been reached by almost all nations on the need to ban anti-personnel landmines and in 1997, agreement was reached after much deliberation, that an International Criminal Court would be established. In Africa, a protocol for establishing an African Court on Human Rights was been approved by the African heads of State at the OAU meeting held in Ouagadougou in June 1998. It is also hoped that the goal of universal ratification of CEDAW can be reached by the year 2000, and that States parties will agree to remove some of the numerous reservations. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights has put it "The normative work is largely done. The international human rights standards are in place. The task for us all...will be to implement them". The means of implementing international human rights standards must be worked out. Civil society organizations, individuals and governments all have a role in effecting positive change. Organizations working on issues such as gender, community development and human rights can network or collaborate with one another and with government, when possible, to have a greater impact.

The new generation must have the opportunity to develop an understanding and knowledge of tools for claiming their social and economic rights in the global environment. Present day students – as future parents and leaders – need to acquire a basic understanding of a rights-based approach as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. Steps are being taken to achieve universal primary education in Africa, more schools are being built, and curricula are undergoing revision. All these factors provide an opportunity for incorporating human rights concepts into formal (and informal) educational initiatives. Civil society is playing an increasingly significant role in participating in the process of monitoring implementation of what governments have agreed to in various global conferences as well as in legal instruments to which they are party.

On their part, governments must find ways to offer their citizens protection from exploitation and imbalanced access to social services that may result from increased privatization. They also have a duty to strive to create an enabling environment, through administrative, legislative and policy measures.

As Professor Savitri Goonesekere has put it, "Human rights education and gender-sensitization at all levels are also a critical dimension of a rights-based approach. This is perhaps the easiest aspect...since there are many partners in the human rights arena, and programmes can be strengthened by linking and networking. It is important that gender-sensitization programmes are linked to human rights education. An environment that is not open in regard to education, diversification of information, participation of civil society including in the political process cannot be receptive to efforts at gender sensitization. Women's groups therefore need to network and make these connections so as to strengthen their own capacity and also impact on the wide range of State and private actors who can be catalysts for creating an environment conducive to realizing gender equality".⁴¹

In some countries, print materials showing the ways in which specific articles of legal instruments such as CEDAW or CRC are supported by the national Constitution have been produced for use by the formal and non-formal educator. OHCHR distributed guidelines to

⁴¹ From a paper presented at a workshop on "A Rights-based Approach to Women's Empowerment and Advancement and Gender Equality", held in Rome, Italy, 5-7 October 1998.

Governments in 1997 that include principles for effective human rights education and strategies for achieving effective outreach and sustainable programmes. In addition, States may seek assistance from ACW (or other United Nations offices such as UNESCO, UNICEF, OHCHR etc.), in developing human rights curricula or rights-based approach to policy making and planning. Through the regional advisor system currently in place within ECA, technical assistance and advisory services are available to African States upon request.

It is hoped that this study will encourage the natural partners in human rights education – the United Nations, national governments and civil society, including the arts and media – guided by national plans of action, to conduct training, develop materials and revise mandates as necessary to ensure that human rights concepts (including the rights of women and children) are speedily incorporated into primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in Africa.

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Annex I

Human rights education in Africa: information from States

The African Centre for Women sent a short questionnaire to each of the 53 Member States of the ECA in order to ascertain what the current state of affairs is in the area of human rights education. A summary of responses and in some cases, other relevant information, follows. It should be kept in mind however, that this provides only a partial picture of what is happening in the area of human rights education as it predominantly covers initiatives by governments. Technical assistance, advisory services and collaborative work is being carried out by a large number of actors including United Nations bodies, programmes and agencies (such as UNESCO and OHCHR) in addition to civil society organizations, bi-lateral donors and international organizations. Also additional information on interesting initiatives by governments – such as efforts to sensitize the police, military, prison administrators and the justice system – could not be included in this paper.

Responses to the questionnaire

1. “Has human rights education been introduced into the formal educational system at the primary or secondary level? If so, when and what is the content?”

Several countries did not respond to the correspondence from ECA but some information was available through reports of various United Nations Committees or other bodies. For example, OHCHR is assisting a number of countries (Angola, Liberia, Rwanda etc.) in developing human rights education initiatives. However, insufficient information was available concerning content, extent of implementation and other details.

Burkina Faso reported that it had been incorporated into the primary level curriculum. At the secondary level, there is no ‘human rights curriculum’ but a Civic Education pilot project begun in May 1995 was due to be completed towards the end of 1998. The Government had proclaimed in 1994, its intention to introduce human rights education; however, no concrete plan was made at that time. Towards the end of 1998, there was to be a conference of the sub-commission of history and geography programmes in order to develop a civic education curriculum that would include human rights and rights of the child. In December 1998, there was to be training of trainers by national experts; from January to September 1998, training of teachers and facilitators; and in September 1999, the new programme was to be implemented as part of the educational requirements. The proposed content includes good citizenship at school and in society; the government structure and functions at local, regional and national levels; individual and social rights; and rights and duties under the Constitution.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sports of **Cape Verde** replied that in 1994/95 “personal and social training” was introduced in secondary schools. This training programme comprises three main subjects: Vocational guidance, interpersonal relations (encompassing family and social life and psychosexual development, and civic and moral education (which covers topics such as values and participation). Special attention is also given to the rights of the child.

While no official response was received from **Central African Republic**, ACW received a copy of a manual for secondary schools produced by the Government entitled “L’élève et les droits de l’homme”. It is divided into chapters covering the following topics: education, work, freedom, violence, justice and law, democracy. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction of

the significance of rights covered within the chapter; presents relevant articles from the UDHR; then short stories which present an issue, followed by discussion questions. Specific issues addressed include: street children (showing their predicament and also that of their parents which caused them to abandon their children), daily labourers, strikes used as a means of changing unfair labour practices, slavery, political parties, elections. In some cases, a folktale or true story is presented to introduce an idea such as how people can pressure the government to change a policy or law, to illustrate the impact of unjust behaviour and so forth. It is also interesting to note that one story looks at domestic work and management of the household. It emphasizes the ways in which girls are socialized to do considerably more work than boys which leaves them with no free time for play, rest or to attend school. It is not known to what extent this booklet has been made available to all secondary schools and if available, whether it is actually used.

The “Ministere de l’enseignement Superieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research) of **Chad** explained that human rights education as a discipline has not been institutionalized within the educational system, but is implicitly included within the Civic and Moral Education curriculum at the primary and secondary level. Human rights have been covered as a separate discipline in teacher training institutes for a ‘long time’. Chad also reported in a United Nations survey that it is considering integrating human rights concepts into the school curricula and has designated the Ministry of Education as the human rights education decade focal point, and the National Commission of UNESCO as a human rights Centre.

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** reported that experts in that country were studying ways in which human rights education could be introduced into the educational system. In a response received from the UNESCO National Commission of **Cote d’Ivoire**, it was explained that an evaluation of the school curricula was in progress. No specific information concerning human rights education was provided.

The Ministry of Education of **Eritrea** responded that human rights/moral and civic education is part of a new national policy and a lot of effort is being made to introduce, at all levels, values such as: a culture of democracy, peace and justice; the importance of liberty and equality regardless of sex, age, religion, educational background or political orientation. The Ministry emphasized the long struggle for recently won independence and the recognition of the role of all citizens in nation-building, reconstruction and social rehabilitation.

Ethiopia informed ECA that within formal school curricula and Civic Education, the Constitution (which shall be interpreted in a “manner conforming to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenants on Human Rights and international instruments adopted by Ethiopia.”), laws and policy development issues are addressed.

Madagascar responded that at the secondary level, human rights education is taught in all schools, while at the primary level, it was included in UNICEF-supported programmes, which did not include all schools

The Ministry of Education of **Mali**, responded that human rights concepts had been incorporated within the Civic and Moral Education curriculum and the teaching of rights and duties of citizens, for a long time. This includes basic rights as spelt out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was further explained that while there is no specific focus on the rights of women and girls or of the child, the importance of these rights is acknowledged.

There were plans to incorporate attention to specific categories of human rights within the Civic Education curriculum in the context of the socio-cultural values of Malien society.

While no official response was received from **Mauritius**, according to information reported at the Third African NGO Human Rights Workshop (Addis Ababa, 1997), human rights education was to be introduced at the level of primary and secondary schools. Mauritius also provided information in a United Nations report that its Ministry of Education has set up a curriculum panel to revise materials to be used in schools for human values education and is working in close cooperation with a national NGO dealing with teacher training for this subject.

Morocco reported that its Ministry of Human Rights and Ministry of Education have signed an agreement for the introduction of human rights education in schools and have jointly developed human rights training and educational materials. These will be used in training teachers and students, authors of textbooks, curriculum developers and other concerned school personnel in human rights standards.

A **Namibian** NGO wrote that human rights education is not treated as a separate subject in the formal educational system. Democracy and human rights issues are incorporated into academic subjects such as social studies, life skills, history and even languages in grades 4 through 10. In grade 4, for instance, the focus is on culture, family life and how people live in social groups at the regional level. Students also learn how the region is governed and how people can work together to develop the region. As part of the history curricula in grade 9, the German colonial period and its impact on rights of the indigenous population is covered.

Under the Life Skills curriculum, students in grades 8 through 10 are taught daily living skills, which includes life, conflicts and roles within the family unit, as well as rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship. Personal-social skills, including socially responsible behavior (such as respects for the rights of others, respecting authority, and proper behavior in public) and occupational guidance (which covers issues such as work habits and behavior) are addressed.

Efforts are being made by NGOs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Culture to have concepts of human rights and democracy taught in the formal educational system as a separate subject. UNESCO is currently planning meetings to address the issue.

The response received from the National Ministry of Education of **Senegal** explained that after the Forum of Kolda (February 1998), presided over by the President of the Republic, the Ministry of National Education, in partnership with several organizations (such as: CIVITAS, IAD, ONDH, RADDHO, CREDHO, SAFEFOD) has committed itself to put in place the basic requirements for introducing human rights education as an integral part of the Civic Education Programme. It was reported that several Human Rights Education clubs have been formed in secondary schools. Civic Education clubs were to be created for primary and secondary level students. The Senegalese Committee on Human Rights initiated the establishment of the clubs, which are supervised by teachers of History and Geography.

A follow-up committee on the Forum of Kolda and a technical committee are carrying out an analysis of the civic education curriculum with the involvement of the rural and urban population. The new curriculum would cover the right to life and security; freedom of information, expression of opinion, association and movement; rights of women, minorities and the rights of the child; right to property, equality before the law, and in public services; and rights to health, education, a healthy environment. It would also address one's duties to respect

the rights of others. Workshops have been organized for elaborating the contents of a programme and plan of action for the development of the new curriculum. The plan was to be finalized and validated at the end of September 1998.

The Ministry of Education of the **Republic of Seychelles** reported that human rights education was introduced into the formal school system on a trial basis in January 1998, with the introduction of Personal and Social Education in schools. Different topics are covered at each level but they include some aspects of economic and political rights as well as rights of the child and women's rights and rights of families. The curriculum integrates education for citizenship and human rights concepts. Although teachers have not been specifically trained in this curriculum such training is planned for, and seen as a key element of the new curriculum. There are also many governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with rights of the child and the reproductive rights of adolescents. From secondary level onwards, some aspects of rights and duties are treated, based on the Seychellois Charter of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms (the Constitution).

The National Curriculum, Research and Development Centre of **Sierra Leone** responded that "Human rights education is not treated as a separate subject in the school curriculum. Rather, human rights, peace, as well as population/family life education are integrated into existing school subjects. The Sierra Leone chapter of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), has developed training modules as part of its "Women and the Culture of Peace" project. One module focuses on human rights and freedoms. The project has been introduced in selected primary schools and after pre-testing; the modules will be presented to the Ministry of Education for inclusion in the formal curriculum.

UNICEF has also sponsored the development of a peace education curriculum. In addition, the Non-formal Primary Education (NFPE) Programme of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, incorporates human rights concepts such as rights and responsibilities of a good citizen, justice and peace in the community studies curricula for the first, second and third year. The programme targets out-of-school children aged 6 to 14 in late afternoon classes offered in the Western Area and several districts.

A representative of the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies in **South Africa** told a Human Rights Workshop in January 1997 that the South African educational system was being transformed. A new outcomes-based curriculum was being introduced and it would include principles of human rights and democracy. For **Tanzania**, a reply was received from the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government, Department of Professional Services of Education explaining that in primary schools, the social studies curriculum includes human rights concepts, while the civics education curriculum incorporates human rights education at the secondary school level. Information was provided on topics covered within the civics education curriculum.

The National Ministry of Education and Research of **Togo** informed ECA that human rights education had been introduced at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in the civic and moral education programme.

Tunisia has a comprehensive and broad range of activities being carried out under its human rights education initiative. The country's report to the High Commissioner for Human Rights included information on all activities carried out within Tunisian society for the promotion of human rights. For example, reform and strengthening of civic education at the primary and secondary level of education, establishment of human rights chairs in law faculties and of a Department of Civic Education to ensure teacher training and the coordination of human

rights research, in-service training of teachers; integration of human rights in the curricula of the training of law enforcement agencies (police and prison officers), including the publication of a code of conduct for these agencies; sensitization of the general public through the media, and the organization of seminars and support to human rights research; an annual celebration of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through the awarding of a human rights prize; media events, school competitions and the organization of regional conferences on human rights issues; cooperation with international institutions and NGOs. Also, a representative of the Tunisia-based Arab Institute for Human Rights, reported in the Third African NGO Human Rights Education Workshop (1997), that Tunisia had also established a National Committee on Human Rights Education.

The Uganda Human Rights Commission responded that Human rights Education is not yet part of the formal educational curricula. However, the Commission is engaged in efforts to develop a syllabus, which will introduce human rights concepts in primary schools. This is being done in conjunction with the Civic Education Coordination Committee, a body chaired by the chairperson of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, which is charged with harmonizing civic education programmes in Uganda. The Committee comprises the Judicial Service Commission; the Inspectorate of Government; Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; the National Environment Management Authority; the Electoral Commission; and the Ministry of Education. The workshop to develop a modus operandi was scheduled for November 1998 and was to include representatives of NGOs, teachers, the Ministry of Education, the Coordination Committee and other stakeholders with relevant expertise. The workshop objectives were to reach agreement on content, develop a methodology, identify pilot schools and look at ways to effectively involve teachers.

2. Involvement of NGOs in human rights education

While no official response was received from **Botswana**, the African Centre for Women had received a copy of a participative human rights education-training manual for youth and non-formal sectors produced by the Botswana Centre for Human Rights, Ditshwanelo. Issues covered include persons living with HIV/AIDS; minority groups such as "bushmen"/basarwa/san; exploitation and abuse in the workplace and problems experienced by domestic workers; the death penalty; violence against women; teenage pregnancy and schooling, child maintenance; property rights; and government policies. Trainees perform various role-plays, read case studies and discussion relevant questions. In addition, information regarding the African Charter, national Constitution, National Assembly, the distinct status and rights of traditional courts and tribal chiefs is presented. However, it is unknown whether the manual is being used within formal educational settings

According to the response from the Government of **Burkina Faso** a new curriculum was developed in 1989-1990, for primary level education. It was reviewed in 1996 and a Burkinabe human rights NGO, Le Mouvement Burkinabe des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (MBDHP), is involved in the revision process. This organization has also launched a pilot programme at the primary and secondary level. The Ibn Batuta Association also has trained fifty teachers as a contribution to human rights education. Finally, l'Union Interafricaine des Droits de l'Homme, which has its headquarters in Ouagadougou, convened a meeting of a committee of experts in October 1997 to design projects and programmes on human rights education at all levels of schooling for African States.

In **Chad**, some human rights associations have organized sensitization campaigns in schools. The Government also stressed the fact that since NGOs and civil society organizations

are important actors in the area of human rights education and training -- sometimes compensating for the limited action of the authorities -- a positive contribution by States to human rights education could include the elimination of obstacles to the creation of such organizations and associations.

In **Kenya**, human rights groups and organizations such as FIDA are recommending the inclusion of human rights as a subject of study in the formal educational system since the formal educational system is currently being reviewed. Human and women's rights groups have been able to spread awareness about these issues within schools. FIDA has also been involved in the establishment of law clubs to spread legal awareness among school and college students as part of so called "extra curricular" activities, and frequently organizes talks and workshops in various schools and colleges throughout Kenya

While no NGOs are providing human rights awareness or education in the schools in **Madagascar**, they have been closely involved in the dissemination of information within communities. A peer education approach has been successful in raising HIV/AIDS awareness at the primary school level. In **Mali**, a number of women associations and NGOs that work in the area of human rights sensitize and educate youth.

Human rights NGOs in **Mauritius** target a lot of their activities to magistrates, lawyers, trade unionists and women's groups. Its report -- which was summarized in the 1996 report on the implementation of the Plan of Action for the UN Decade for Human Rights Education -- Mauritius stated that its Ministry of Education had set up a curriculum panel to revise materials to be used in schools for human values education, and is working in close cooperation with a national NGO for teacher training.

In **Namibia**, efforts are being made by NGOs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Culture to have concepts of human rights and democracy taught in the formal educational system. UNESCO is currently planning meetings to address the issue. An NGO, the Legal Assistance Centre also has a Legal Education Programme that is responsible for school visits to inform children about their rights and responsibilities.

Senegal responded that the Ministry is working in partnership with NGOs working on human rights issues in order to harmonize their activities in areas such as training. In the **Republic of Seychelles** many governmental and non-governmental organizations are concerned about the rights of the child and the reproductive rights of adolescents.

In **Sierra Leone** NGOs play an important role, particularly in non-formal education. The NGO ActionAid, for example, incorporates human welfare promotion in non-formal programmes, especially in Kambia District. The People's Educational Association (P.E.A.), an adult education association, also incorporates population, peace and human rights concepts in its curriculum for adult education classes.

In the reply received from **Zanzibar, Tanzania**, it was reported that there were no organizations which sensitize students in addition to, or instead of, the formal school system. In **Togo** various NGOs and associations raise awareness among students on human rights concepts. The activities reported include the organization of talks and discussions, often for village development groups. Topics covered include: democracy, marriage, divorce, rights of succession, girls' education, and the rights and duties of citizens in accordance with the Constitution.

The **Uganda** Human Rights Commission responded that it is engaged in efforts to develop a syllabus including human rights concepts, for primary schools. This is being done in conjunction with the Civic Education Coordination Committee, a body chaired by the chairperson of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, and charged with harmonizing civic education programmes in Uganda (See question 1 above for more details). The Human Rights Commission also conducts civic education seminars.

3. Are rights of women or the girl-child covered in the school curricula?

Burkina Faso responded that although it is not explicit, the rights of different groups such as children and women are touched on as part of all human rights. In the booklet prepared for teaching human rights in **Central African Republic**, rights of girls and women is the focus of one story that looks at domestic work and management of the household. It emphasizes the way in which girls are socialized to do considerably more work than boys which leaves them with no free time for play, rest or to attend school. However, it is not known to what extent this booklet has been made available to all secondary schools and if available, whether it is actually used. **Eritrea** emphasized that striving for gender equality and the education of girls is seen as a normal obligation of a democracy. An NGO from **Kenya** reported that attempts to introduce family life education, which would empower young women with knowledge of their reproductive rights, have met with serious opposition from politically influential church groups and conservative leaders in the government.

In **Madagascar**, there was a lack of acceptance of the concept of “women’s rights” and “children’s rights” to the extent that it was seen as destabilizing to the society. Many parents and teachers were unsupportive of introducing human rights education in the schools although after sensitization efforts, acceptance had increased. However, it is unknown whether other concepts of women’s rights were being introduced in schools. In the response from **Mali**, it was explained that while there is no specific focus on the rights of women and girls or of the child, the importance of these rights was acknowledged. In **Namibia** in grade 5 students learn about women in Namibian history, life in early communities, the diversity of people which makes up the population and how people deal with conflicts is introduced. In grade 6, the concept of equal pay for both sexes for equal worth, affirmative action and family units – types of marriages, the Married Persons Equality Act, rights and responsibilities within the family and traditions such as “Lobola” or bride price. In grade 10, the role of religious institutions in defending human rights and resisting colonial rule, the democratic process of drawing up the Constitution and its content are taught. Equality of males and females is presented as a separate topic. This includes the position of women in society, major international conferences on women’s issues and human rights and relevant sections in the Constitution

In **Sierra Leone**, Junior Secondary School topics include: The Constitution and its strengths and weaknesses; the role of media in a democracy; the convention on Rights of the Child, National Council for Children and CEDAW; human rights –freedom and security, the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights and its Articles. The Planned Parenthood Association of Sierra Leone helps to promote family planning, responsible parenthood and reproductive health in the schools. This includes the rights of women to play an equal role in deciding on the number of children and spacing and other matters which involve a couple.

In **Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania**, the Form II syllabus covers public legal education as one of the main topics. This includes law and crime as well as reproductive rights and laws. In Primary five, under the theme of Democracy, criminal offenses including sexual assault and harassment are discussed. The Ministry of Education recognized the rights of

women and girls as basic human rights and appointed a Gender Officer in 1996. The office has conducted a series of workshops to sensitize Ministry officials, school heads and members of school committees about gender equality and on the need to remove gender stereotypes from textbooks as well as classroom interactions. In collaboration with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), the Ministry of Education conducted a study on sexual harassment in the schools, which aimed at collecting data on behaviour and situations fostering sexual harassment, so as to raise awareness of students and enable them to avoid or deal with such situations. Also through FAWE, the Ministry has initiated a programme on Girls' Participation and Performance in Science and Mathematics, which aims at encouraging girls, especially in secondary school, to become more interested in and improve performance in such subjects.

In **Togo**, it was explained that teaching about the rights of women and girls is not covered explicitly although the ability of students to understand these issues is enhanced through other concepts to which the students are introduced.

Annex II

Methods and Resources for Human Rights Education

A. Human Rights Education Resources

1. Versions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in languages spoken in Africa

Various language versions of the Declaration are available from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and some can be downloaded from its web site (<http://www.unhchr.ch>). Many of the UN Information Centres located in many African capitals also have local language versions

Afrikaans	Lozi
Akuapem Twi	Lunda/Chokwe-lunda
Amharic	Luvale
Arabic	Malagasy
Asante	Maninka
Bambara	Ndebele
Baole	Nyanja
Bemba	Nzema
Dagaare	Oshiwambo
Dagbani	Peulh/Pular
Dangme	Pidgin English (Nigeria)
English	Portuguese
Eve	Rukenzo
Fante	Shona
French	Siswati
Ga	Somali
Gonja	Sotho/Pedi (northern, southern, western)
Hausa/Haoussa	Sussu/Soussou Sosso
Igbo	Swahili
Kaonde	Tamazight (Berber)
Kasem	Tonga
Kinyarwanda	Tswana
Kirundi	Wolof
Kituba	Xhosa
Kpelewo	Yoruba
Lingala	Zulu

2. Print Resources

1. UNESCO

UNESCO has produced a classroom Manual for Human Rights Education for primary and secondary school students. A revised version was to be produced in December 1998. It has been made available in French, English and Arabic. UNESCO has also developed a Civics Education Kit, which includes materials on education for peace, human rights, intercultural understanding and democracy along with the Manual for Human Rights Education. The Kit is distributed to

UNESCO field offices and National Commissions in English and French. Many activities are also carried out through its project entitled "Towards a Culture of Peace". National Commissions for UNESCO, which exist in a large number of countries can provide more specific information about country-level UNESCO activities.

2. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

ICRC is one of several non-governmental organizations which disseminates information on international humanitarian law. The then newly created organization was instrumental in bringing into effect the Geneva Convention of 1864 and still monitors and enforces provisions of the four Geneva Conventions.

3. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been made responsible for co-ordinating and harmonizing human rights education and information strategies within the United Nations system, including the implementation of the Plan of Action, and to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the use, processing, management and distribution of human rights information and educational materials, including through electronic means. The Commission is also expected to support national capacities for human rights education and information through its technical assistance programme in the field of human rights, including the organization of training courses and the development of targeted training materials for professional audiences, as well as the dissemination of human rights information materials as a component of technical co-operation projects.

4. United Nations Information Centres (UNICs)

United Nations Information Centres, located in the capital cities of several African countries (Accra, Addis Ababa, Algiers, Antananarivo, Brazzaville, Bujumbura, Cairo, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Harare, Khartoum, Kinshasa, Lagos, Lome, Lusaka, Maseru, Nairobi, Ouagadougou, Pretoria, Rabat, Tripoli, Tunis, Windhoek, and Yaounde) disseminates basic information, reference and audio-visual materials on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the reports of States parties under human rights instruments.

5. Sisterhood is Global Institute

The Institute has produced a number of publications on human rights and women. Examples include:

- *Safe and Secure* (A Violence against Women manual), and
- *Claiming Our Rights: A Manual for Women's Human Rights Education Manual in Muslim Societies*

This manual was designed to promote human rights awareness among women at the grass roots level, particularly those living in Muslim societies. It provides concrete guidelines aimed at promoting dialogue among women about themes relevant to their daily lives. The themes reflect the concerns articulated during the Fourth World Conference on Women convened in Beijing in September 1995, and include: women's rights and responsibilities within the family; women's rights to subsistence; women's rights to autonomy in family planning decisions; women's rights to bodily integrity (confronting domestic violence, assisting victims of rape and punishing the perpetrator, resisting violence and making the law work for women, reconsidering participation in public life); women's rights to education and learning; women's rights to employment and fair compensation; women's rights to privacy, religious beliefs and free expression; women's rights during times of conflict and women's rights to political participation.

3. Internet resources

1. UNESCO: <http://www.education.unesco.org/educprog/humanrig>
2. Sisterhood is Global Institute: <http://www.sigi.org>
3. ICRC: <http://www.icrc.ch>
4. UNICEF <http://www.unicef.org> Provides information on rights of the child, protection of children in times of armed conflict etc.
5. Human rights internet <http://www.hri.ca> (an international network of human rights organizations, documentation centre, and publishing house. This site provides information on obtaining educational materials, UN documentation, materials etc. Human Rights Internet – Human Rights Education: Resources for University teaching Syllabi: <http://www.hri.ca/hredu/univ/syllabi/index.htm>
6. The Institute for Global Communications (IGC) is a non-profit organization that provides alternative sources of information. Its mission is to advance and inform movements for peace, economic and social justice, human rights and environmental sustainability around the world by promoting strategic use of appropriate computer networking technology. ConflictNet, EcoNet, LabourNet, PeaceNet and WomensNet are programmes under IGC that link organizations and individuals for specific purposes. Websites are as follows: ConflictNet@igc.org, EcoNet@igc.org, LabourNet@igc.org, PeaceNet@igc.org and WomensNet@igc.org.
7. The People's Decade of human Rights Education <http://www.pdhre.org>: The web site of a non-profit, international service organization that works directly and indirectly through its network of affiliates – primarily women's and social justice organizations -- to develop and promote pedagogies for human rights education relevant to people's daily lives in the context of their struggle for social and economic justice and democracy.
8. Madre - An International Women's Human Rights Organization <http://www.madre.org/programs.htm> This is a multi-racial, cross-class NGO whose aim is to further women's long-term economic development and political empowerment.
9. IWRAW – International Women's Rights Action Watch <http://www.igc.apc.org/iwraw>. It is an international network of activists, scholars and organizations that focus on the advancement of women's human rights and monitors the implementation of CEDAW.
10. African Women's Rights <http://www.africapolicy.org/action/women.htm>. This site provides links and documents on African and South African women's and gender-related issues.
11. BIEF: Répertoire d'information sur les droits de la personne <http://www.francophonie.org/bief/repdroit/dr> This site provides addresses of organizations and groups dealing with human rights and women's rights in several Francophone African countries.
12. DIANA Index – Women's Rights http://diana.law.yale.edu/diana/db/idx_womens_rights.html This site provides cases, collections and documents that pertain to women's rights

13. Africa Women: <http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/women.html> This site provides a directory on a wide variety of sites related to women in Africa.
14. Women's Human Rights <http://www1.umn.edu/humanarts/links/women/html>
This is an Internet directory on women's human rights web pages.\
15. ENDA-SYNFEV (Solidarite electronique pour les femmes d'Afrique):
<http://www.enda.sn/synfev/solidarite/solindex.htm> This site provides information on Africa-specific and general interest information in French.

Annex III

Teaching methods

1. Theatre

Theatre can be an entertaining and educative medium for raising awareness on various issues. It is already being used to provide HIV/AIDS education and could become a channel for discussing human rights. Students can organize street theatre performances or puppet shows in or outside of schools.

A well developed approach is Forum Theatre which was started by a Brazilian, Augusto Boal. It focuses on everyday life and surroundings. The actors present the situation and through groupwork, participants develop an understanding of themselves and others. The process of creating a play involves first studying material on the topic from different points of view and aspects such as legal, socio-cultural and so on. Actors do research by interviewing people who are familiar with the topic, and develop a script from the information.

This type of theatre works best for imparting information and education in co-operation with other organizations, ministries and schools. Topics such as abuse, rape, street children and substance abuse can be explored. No specific equipment is needed, the setting can be in or outdoors. Close contact with the audience is expected. The audience should be familiar with the situation being presented. Through the play, the audience is encouraged and provoked to express its opinion and share experiences.

2. Role Play

This is a simulation of a real situation by participants who have specific roles to act out. It is a good participatory activity that allows attitudes and situations to come to life in a secure environment and for people to reflect on their own attitudes. The steps to using role play as an educational tool are: (i) Identify a theme; (ii) identify and assign roles; (iii) act out roles and encourage spontaneity; (v) formulate questions to focus on the rights issues being presented; (vi) evaluate the role play. It is important for people to react to the role play (observers as well as actors) so as to assess their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour.

3. Mock Court case hearing

A mock trial can be an effective way of helping students to understand how courts work -- which in itself helps to encourage people to exercise their rights under the law. In some cases, the judiciary has been involved as a way of making this approach less threatening to educational authorities who may fear to appear confrontational. In addition, students can gain life skills through practising public speaking, preparing the case, acting as lawyers/plaintiffs and making a fair judgement.

4. Games

Games involve students in experiential learning and can be an enjoyable way of learning complex principles in simple terms. Steps involved in designing a human rights education game are: (i) identify the basic concept of the game, for example, the game "Snakes and Ladders" could be modified so that the snakes represent human rights abuses, while the ladders represent recognition of human rights; (ii) prepare lists of both abuses and recognition/protection of human

rights; (iii) decide which rights (abuses and protection/recognition) are the most significant -- a longer snake or longer ladder would represent a more significant abuse or protection of rights. (v) the snakes and ladders would then be drawn on a board or paper with squares marked off. Below or beside each snake or ladder, a specific right or violation of a right would be written down. At the end of a game participants should be debriefed and the concepts covered can be discussed.

5. Story telling

Folk stories and songs have long been used to teach appropriate behaviour, morals and human rights. They are a particularly effective channel through which children can be taught and a popular way for people to express themselves in many cultures. When using stories or songs: first, make a brief introduction; tell the story; ask listeners what they learned and what the implications of the story were (write out on a blackboard); finally, connect the story to human rights instruments or issues.

6. Debates

A debate is often an effective way to guide students to look at more than one side of a controversial issue. To begin a debate activity, statements or issues can be presented. Students are asked to briefly research the issue and then debate both sides of the issue in two or more groups (depending on class size and angles to the issue). Students can take turns acting as core debate team members, while others help plan arguments and strategy. This should be an opportunity for girls as well as boys to practice leadership. Everyone should have an opportunity to listen to the arguments and then a vote could be taken if students so wish. Afterwards, the feelings and reactions of the students can be shared.

7. Use of community resource persons

If possible, people with relevant experience – for instance professionals working in law enforcement, the judicial system, on a particular social issue, and so on -- could be invited as guests and interviewed by the students. The session could provide an opportunity for students to understand what various professions entail, how the community functions and how rights are addressed within various structures. If the political situation allows, people who have experience with a rights issue (positive or negative), could be invited to share their experience. Youth association, religious communities, minority ethnic groups, women's organizations and others are useful information sources for resource persons.

Resource persons could also be asked to co-teach. For example, a police officer could observe students role-playing a situation involving the police. This could provide an opportunity to introduce an often-ignored issue such as domestic violence. Afterwards, the police officer can debrief the class. This might be especially useful if there has been a recent training course or changes in policy within the police administration. Similarly, if laws have recently been changed, it might be an opportune time to sensitize students to the changes and help them to understand why the changes were made.

8. Case studies

Case studies utilize real or hypothetical situations as a way to lead students to find solutions to problems. They can be an effective way of introducing students to a situation in which they are not involved, but where they can act as neutral observers. Case studies help

students develop decision-making, critical thinking skills and logic. It may also be advisable to guide students in distinguishing facts versus opinion and identifying the most important facts from lesser ones. Students can be asked to prepare arguments and solutions in groups through consensus. By discussing a situation involving women or a marginalized group students can learn to approach the problem from their viewpoint.

9. Opinion Polls

Opinion polls give students a chance to express their views and see how they compare to their peers. A poll can also be conducted before introducing a case study. Once opinions are summarized, an opportunity is provided to discuss the basis on which such opinions have been formed (religious or parental influence etc.). Secondary school in particular could benefit from such an exercises as they help students to understand basic statistical concepts as well as encouraging them to reflect on a human right. Students can prepare a questionnaire and answer the questions anonymously.

Annex IV

Approaches of specific human rights education initiatives⁴²

1. Reardon Model of Human Rights Education*

DEVELOPMENTAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

For each developmental level of primary and secondary schooling, generally appropriate core concepts and values, issues and problems and human rights standards and instruments to be introduced are suggested as follows:

EARLY CHILDHOOD--GRADES K-3

rules
order
respect
fairness
diversity
equality
personal responsibility
classroom rules
Declaration of the Rights of the Child
inequality
unfairness
harm

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD--GRADES 4-6

citizenship
community
constitution
law
social responsibility
community standards
African Freedom Charter
Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Convention on the Rights of the Child
discrimination
injustice

EARLY ADOLESCENCE--GRADES 7-9

justice
equality
equity
conventions
covenants
global responsibility
Regional Human Rights Conventions
U.N. Covenants & Conventions:
Elimination of Racism; Discrimination against Women; Civil and Political Rights;

⁴² The information in this annex was obtained through the Internet.

and Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
ethnocentrism
sexism
authoritarianism
colonialism
hunger

ADOLESCENCE--GRADES 10-12

moral exclusion
moral responsibility
world citizenship
ecological responsibility and environmental abuse
Nuremberg Principles
U.N. Conventions on:
Prevention & Punishment of Genocide;
Prevention & Elimination of Torture
Defining & developing new standards
ethnocide
genocide
torture
political repression

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2. The Partners in Human Rights Education Approach

Partners in Human Rights Education is an organization working in the area of human rights education. Its approach is to use 3-person teams. The roles and responsibilities of each is:

(a) Teacher

Provides the classroom setting, instructs the students in human rights principles, and assists the team in developing the classroom instructional model.

(b) Lawyer

Assists the team and students in connecting human rights issues and social action activities to the applicable legal foundations.

(c) Community Resource Person

Assists the team and students with a social action component, facilitating the application of human rights principles into the real life situations of the students.

Drawing on views of focus group participants, it was agreed that rather than develop one standard curriculum it would be more useful to create a general framework for teaching about human rights in different situations. Accordingly, the teams are given a set of cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal goals based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which would signify that human rights values have been understood. Teams and students develop the knowledge and skills behind the human rights attitudes. Using the framework of the UDHR, teams teach students about human rights and responsibilities. Students apply what they learn in their local community through human rights action projects. All teams are encouraged to use interactive teaching methods in working with students.

A list of general human rights education objectives follows. However, adjustments must be made according to the level of cognitive and affective development of the group of students. The first part of this annex provides some general guidelines on what concepts are appropriate at each level.

(d) Knowledge and behavioural objectives

Participants will aspire to put their learning into action by:

- Recognizing that every human being is born with the inalienable human rights listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Distinguishing between civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights through an understanding of the International Bill of Human Rights.
- Defining key human rights terms and applying them appropriately. Lists assume previous grades knowledge of terms. Key human rights terms include:

Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 4 ,Grades 5-8 ,Grades 9-12

- Responsibility (Personal, Social, Legal, and Moral)
 - Fairness, Discrimination, Equality
 - Order Freedom Justice
 - Rules, Laws, Covenants
 - Nationality, Citizenship, State Sovereignty
 - Diversity, Discrimination, Genocide
 - Immigrants/migrants, Refugees, Asylum
 - Participation, Democracy, Global Community
- Using language respectful of others' race or ethnic group, sex, religion, physical strength, size, features, friendship groups, age, culture, disability, financial status, clothing, classroom performance etc. and actively encouraging others to do so.
 - Working co-operatively with others and identifying and applying appropriate strategies for problem solving.
 - Sharing resources with the community.
 - Recognizing a diversity of opinions and making a concerted effort to understand them.
 - Taking responsibility for own values and actions.
 - Participating in democratic decision making as a citizen of a local, national, and international community.
 - Analyzing a human rights problem, developing potential solutions, and taking action in a way that upholds the human rights of all parties involved.

3. ATTITUDINAL OBJECTIVES

(Outlined with Groupings of the 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

Participants in the programme will aspire not only to learn about human rights and to practice human responsibilities, but also to internalize these attitudes as a part of their personal ethical framework. Below each grouping of articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a specific corresponding value. Sample activities, which apply attitudinal objectives, are also provided.

(e) Articles 1 and 2 (equality & discrimination)

The individual respects self and others, regardless of situation, race, sex, physical strength, size features, friendship groups, age, culture, disability, financial status, clothing, classroom performance. She or he is concerned about the equal treatment of all and takes pride in her/his own contributions as well as the contributions of others.

Sample activities:

- Identify and question assumptions or stereotypes about others.
- Describe a period and place when discrimination has had a significant impact on a group in society.
- List the steps that could be or have been taken to solve a discrimination problem, or that could be used to solve a problem of social, legal, economic, or political discrimination
- Differentiate structures of power
- Compare sources of power within and across situations
- Depict in words or drawings the actual or potential sources of power that can exist in a given time or place

(f) Article 3, 4, and 5 (slavery, inhuman and degrading treatment)

The individual believes that all human beings are equal and therefore should not be subjected to any form of slavery, inhuman or degrading treatment. She believes it has a negative impact on individuals as well as on the societies that condone that behaviour. She values acting in a way that promotes the safety and wellbeing of herself and others.

Sample activities:

- Explain the emotional and psychological implication of inhuman and degrading treatment on an individual or community, using historical examples or research in current psychology or sociology
- Compare slavery or servitude in different time periods or in different places, and support a few generalizations about the conditions that elicit oppression of a particular group or individual

(g) Articles 6 - 11 (equal treatment before the law)

The individual is sensitive to the importance of all others being treated fairly. He is concerned when another person or group is being treated unfairly. He holds the same rules for himself with which he expects others to comply. The individual believes that everyone is entitled to a fair trial.

Sample activities:

- Apply the UDHR to determine the legal rights entitled to a person or group
- Examine court cases in history that address the right to privacy and compares the rationale used in each of these cases, or
- Research governmental policies that have infringed on the individuals right to privacy
- Hypothesize about tensions that might arise about the right to privacy in a time of war
- Defend a position on the governments right to know versus the citizens right to privacy in a time of war
- Display a historical perspective on conceptions of privacy in your society through a speech, essay, debate, skit etc.
- Write a persuasive essay on the topic of privacy in relation to a health or medical concern

(h) Articles 13-15 (free movement, asylum, nationality)

The individual values her citizenship and nationality and believes all others are entitled to the same. She respects an individual's choice to come and go freely between countries, as well as to change her country of citizenship. She believes in offering protection to people who are being persecuted. She values protection for herself and others.

Apply the UDHR to to come and go freely between countries, as well as to change her country of citizenship. She believes in offering protection to people who are being persecuted. She values protection for herself and others.

Sample activities:

- Analyze governmental policies as they relate to immigrants, refugees and/or individuals seeking asylum
- Investigate the social services provided for recent immigrants to the local community. develop a proposal for improving the services available to new immigrants
- List some of the reasons people may leave a country and the struggles they face when they arrive in a new country
- Create a timeline tracking the movement of a particular refugee group to America
- Compare and contrast, using examples from the present and the past, the difference between being a refugee and being an immigrant
- Explain the rights and responsibilities connected with their own citizenship. contrast the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship in their time and country to citizens of a different country or time
- Analyze the rights of an individual accused of war crimes in seeking asylum
- Analyze the rights of a draft dodger in seeking asylum

(i) Article 16 (marriage and family)

Individuals respect the right of all people to enter into relationships of their own choosing, and also the nature of the relationships chosen for marriage, family, and friendship. They believe that males and females enter into relationships as equals, and remain so regardless of the status of their relationship.

Sample activities:

- Research the economics of family life
- List the factors contributing to an ongoing domestic violence situation and the steps that a person should take if they are trying to get out of a dangerous domestic situation
- Interview a community leader, social worker, sociologist about a particular issue in families today and present their findings to the class in the forum of a panel discussion

(j) Articles 18, 19 and 20 (Freedom of belief, religion, opinion, information, and association)

The individual respects the right of alternative and opposing points of view to exist. He values other points of view and the freedom of all to choose their own beliefs, religion, opinions, information and associations.

Sample activities:

- Write and perform a play that voices several perspectives on an issue, and that establishes a structure for solving a problem together
- Organize a structured controversy on a pre-determined topic, alternately debating opposite sides of the issue

(k) Article 21 (political rights)

The individual believes in the importance of democratic decision making and in acting as a citizen of a local, national, and international community.

Sample activities:

- Conduct a debate on a local community issue after researching the various perspectives on it, derive a class consensus and solicit a local governing body to enact their solution
- Research an issue and inform their local, state, or national representative about their findings and the action that they would like taken
- Participate in student government

(l) Article 22 & 25 (personal development within society)

The individual desires to improve the welfare of all members of her local, state, and global community. She believes that all people can and should live in dignity, and therefore values efforts to meet individual needs as they arise.

Sample activities:

- Organize a community improvement scheme or volunteer for a local social service provider- keep a daily log of skills utilized, knowledge acquired, and the impact of the work on the local community

(m) Article 23 & 24 (economic rights: work, labor, rest, leisure, food/shelter)

The individual values basic economic rights that each individual has, including the right to vacation, limited work hours and equal pay.

Sample activities:

- Research the situation regarding child labour or analyze specific ILO Conventions and discuss their impact, how they came about etc.

(n) Article 26 (education)

The individual aspires to actively support others in their learning and regards his learning and his own responsibility. He believes that education is fundamental to the functioning of society and supports equal access for all to education in his society.

Sample activities:

- Use cooperative learning for any task -- assign roles, have students evaluate their collective as well as individual work
- Complete individual learning projects over the course of a semester, and then have students teach others, in their own class, or by visiting another school

(o) Article 27-29 (cultural and social rights)

The individual appreciates the cultural life of the community. She highly regards the involvement and inclusion of all people in the cultural life of the community.

Sample activities:

- Invite an artist/craftsperson to visit the school and talk about his/her work
- Study the portrayal of different groups in popular culture over time, and how the portrayal of different groups has contributed to their ability to participate in the cultural life of the community
- Choose an area with a unique cultural heritage and investigate the influences of that heritage on life in the community

(p) Article 30 (right of rights)

The individual believes that everyone should be guaranteed all of the above rights regardless of their individual values.