

196 EX/30 : “Learning without fear : preventing and combating school-related gender-based violence”

Proposed decision

The Executive Board,

1. Aware of the efforts made by the United Nations system to denounce and raise awareness of the international community to fight against violence, particularly against women, girls and children,
2. Mindful of:
 - (a) the provisions of the relevant instruments of the United Nations Organisation concerning Human Rights, including: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO) of 1960 (Article 1); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 (Article 10) and its general comment N°19; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 19 and 28) and its optional protocols; the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (Chapter IV, B); the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel of 1997 (V, VII, VIII, IX); the Dakar Framework for Action (2000); the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000); The “A world fit for children” Declaration, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations during its 27th extraordinary session in 2002 (Par. 7 al 4,5 et 6) and its plan of action; the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (2007) entitled “*Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women*” (A/RES/61/143);
 - (b) the report of the Open Working group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG), which was submitted by the co-chairs of the OWG to the UNGA for consideration and appropriate action, particularly targets 4.5, 4.a, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.c,
3. Recalling that:
 - (a) as stated in its Constitution, the purpose of UNESCO is “*to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion*”, and that education has been considered as one of its principal missions since its establishment;
 - (b) that UNESCO is committed to a holistic and humanistic vision of quality education worldwide, the progressive realization of everyone’s right to education, and the belief that education plays a fundamental role in human, social and economic development, (37 C/56);
 - (c) and that UNESCO has designated gender equality as one of its two global priorities for the period 2014-2021 (37 C/4),

4. Welcoming UNESCO's action with respect to promoting girls' education and mobilizing against school-related gender-based violence, by developing the Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education, and jointly chairing, with the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), the Global Working Group on school-related gender-based violence, in close cooperation with UN women as the lead UN agency in coordinating and promoting the work on gender equality and empowerment of women;
5. Emphasizing that in the context of the United Nations-facilitated debate on the post-2015 international development agenda, UNESCO, in line with its mandate as lead agency in education, has a major role in facilitating consultations of Member States, civil society and other key stakeholders on the vision and position of education in the post-2015 agenda,
6. Also recognizing that violence against children and school-related gender-based violence in particular, has devastating effects on children's dignity on the enjoyment of human rights, and constitutes a major obstacle to the equal enjoyment of the right to education, gender equality at all levels of education and sustainable, transformative and inclusive development,
7. Recognizing that school-related gender-based violence:
 - (a) is an expression of gender stereotyping and gender inequality at work in all of our societies, the reproduction of which is sustained through that violence;
 - (b) includes all forms of violence and threats of violence directed specifically against a pupil because of gender and/or that affects girls and boys disproportionately, as the case may be;
 - (c) can be of a physical, sexual or psychological nature and take the form of intimidation, punishment, ostracism, corporal punishment, bullying, humiliation and degrading treatments, harassment, sexual abuses and exploitation;
 - (d) can be inflicted by pupils, teachers or members of the educational community;
 - (e) can occur: within the school; in its outbuildings; on the way to or from school; during extracurricular activities or through the increasingly widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT) (cyber-bullying, sexual harassment through mobile phones);
 - (f) can have serious and long-term consequences such as: loss of confidence and self-esteem, impaired physical and psychological health, early and unintended pregnancies, depressions, reduced learning achievement, absenteeism and drop-out, aggressive behaviours etc.
8. Expressing concern that in all countries worldwide, primary and secondary school, which should be a safe space for self-development, can become a place where children are exposed to various forms of gender-based violence,
9. Expressing particular concern that girls, owing to gender stereotypes and inequalities of power at work in all our societies, are the primary victims of this violence,

10. Noting that this violence, often tolerated and sustained in the very institutions that are supposed to fight against it, remains largely unreported and unpunished because the victims are afraid of being stigmatized, while it is growing at an alarming rate and particularly affects children in vulnerable situations such as conflict, migration, refugee camps, extreme poverty, disability or ethnical minority.
11. Considering that the low capacity of educational players in matters of gender and girls' education, gaps in knowledge, indicators and data on this taboo subject, and the lack of coordination to support the implementation of strategies and action to be introduced to prevent the dimension of gender-based violence from being taken into account effectively in education policies and systems,
12. Considering, on the other hand, that a better understanding of all dimensions of this gender-based violence is essential to enable educational institutions to prevent these acts, protect children, particularly girls, and contribute to changing attitudes concerning gender roles in favour of gender equality,
13. Condemns gender-based violence, as well as all forms of violence in and around schools in all its forms and manifestations;
14. Encourages governments of UNESCO Member States to adopt national policies and action plans resulting from a multisectoral, multi-level and multi-stakeholder consultation, including such measures as:
 - (a) developing or strengthening legal frameworks, internal regulations and official codes of conduct to end impunity for perpetrators of violence;
 - (b) guaranteeing safe, inclusive environments conducive to gender equality by reviewing educational approaches including alternative methods of discipline, contents, curricula and materials, as well as the establishment of gender-sensitive and appropriate learning spaces;
 - (c) developing initial and continuing training curricula for the educational community designed to raise awareness of school-related gender-based violence and gender equality at school;
 - (d) involving young people, members and leaders of communities with a participatory approach through education, mentoring and outreach programmes concerning non-violence, children's rights, gender equality and girls empowerment;
 - (e) establishing mechanisms for the collection of data, reporting, referral and follow-up of this gender-based violence both inside and outside school, through intersectoral coordination in order to measure results of various violence prevention activities;
15. Calls upon the organizations of the United Nations system, Member States, development partners and civil society organizations to:
 - (a) strengthen partnerships, research, exchanges of good practice and experience, and to increase their support for the implementation of these national action plans;
 - (b) make combating school-related gender-based violence a priority in their cooperation and development policies;

16. Thanks the Director-General for the action already undertaken to strengthen the coordination of partners in the fight against school-related gender-based violence;
17. Requests the Director-General to submit to it, at its 197th session, a tentative roadmap specifying UNESCO's role in achieving the following objectives:
 - (a) strengthening partnerships within the United Nations system, particularly through the global working group on SRGBV;,
 - (b) increasing awareness by mobilizing UNESCO's means of communication for media campaigns and UNESCO networks: National Commissions, UNESCO Chairs, associated schools, category 1 and 2 institutes and centres;
 - (c) identifying ongoing UNESCO programmes, data collection mechanisms and standard-setting instruments that may be updated to incorporate in a cross-cutting manner the fight against school-related gender-based violence;
 - (d) defining the operational modalities for capacity building and technical support for countries for the implementation and monitoring of national plans for prevention and response to gender-based violence in the education sector;
 - (e) finalizing the development of global guidelines for the prevention and response to gender-based violence in the education sector with a view to adoption by the General Conference and/or the United Nations General Assembly, under the coordination of UN Women as the lead agency of the UN system in this regard;
 - (f) laying the foundations for a global monitoring and reporting mechanism on school-related gender-based violence;
18. Also requests the Director-General to clarify the conditions, including financial resources (extrabudgetary voluntary contributions from Member States), to be met prior to the implementation of the tentative roadmap requested in paragraph 15, for each of its subparagraphs;
19. Invites the Director-General to continue to advocate the right to education for all boys and girls delivered in a safe, non-violent and inclusive environment in the post-2015 development agenda, to include the fight against school-related gender-based violence in the future framework for action on education and ensure that it is taken into account in the indicator definition process.