HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
First session
Agenda item 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251
OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED “HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL”

Joint written statement* submitted by the International Alliance of Women (IAW),
International Council of Women (ICW-CIF), World Organization of the Scout
Movement (WOSM), The International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF),
Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI), World Federation of
United Nations Associations (WFUNA), non-governmental organizations in general
consultative status and Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for
Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and International Movement of Catholic Students),
International Organization for the Development of Freedom of Education (OIDEL),
International Young Catholic Students (IYCS), World Young Women's Christian
Association (World YWCA), Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association
(PPSEAWA), Society for Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI),
World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW), Planetary
Association for Clean Energy (PACE), Interreligious and International Federation for
World Peace (IIFWP),
Institute of Global Education, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
(WILPF), Interfaith International, North South XXI, Women's World Summit
Foundation (WWSF), Federación de Asociaciones de Defensa Promoción de los
Derechos Humanos, Teresian Association, non-governmental organizations in special
consultative status and Soka Gakkai International (SGI), Institute for Planetary
Synthesis (IPS), International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAG) and
Servas International, non-governmental organizations on the Roster

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

[16 June 2006]

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

GE.06-12690
Joint statement by NGOs on human rights education and learning

The United Nations has been constructively promoting human rights education, as an effective tool for both the prevention of human rights violations and the improvement of human rights protection. Human rights education and learning serve to realise mutual respect for human rights, disseminate relevant information on human rights and help to shape better behaviour toward a culture of human rights, that will foster mutual understanding and tolerance between diverse societies and cultures. The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) aimed to raise global awareness of human rights and promote such a universal human rights culture. The Decade was followed by the World Programme for Human Rights Education, of which the Plan of Action was adopted by the General Assembly (A/59/525) and started 1 January 2005 with its first phase (2005-2007) focusing on human rights education in primary and secondary school systems. The World Programme is now an ongoing global process structured in consecutive phases focusing on a specific sector or theme for every phase to follow.

In the light of the reform of the United Nation mechanism on human Rights, the issue human rights education and learning has rightly been placed as one of the central concerns of the Council as clearly stated in operative paragraph 5 of General Assembly Resolution 60/251 on the establishment of the Human Rights Council according to which the council will:

“Promote human rights education and learning as well as advisory services, technical assistance and capacity building, to be provided in consultation with and with the consent of Member States concerned”.

We, the co-signed NGOs, understand that human rights education and learning are effective tools to tackle the root causes of all human rights violations, and to help continue international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations, cultures and religions.

The above-mentioned General Assembly Resolution clearly indicates the importance of placing human rights education and learning as part of the fundamental basis of the work of the Council. In this regard and in this process of institutionalisation of the Human Rights Council, we, the co-signed NGOs, urge the Council to:

1. Include the following as an Item in the list of the Agenda on the substantial issues of the Council:

   “Human rights education and learning, advisory services, technical assistance and capacity building, as well as public information on human rights”

2. Encourage each member state of the United Nations to include human rights education and learning as part of their human rights policy which should be concretised in a programme for implementation in a specific period of time and to require them to indicate it clearly in their voluntary pledge for the candidacy for the Human Rights Council membership.
3. Place human rights education and learning as one of the essential elements in the process of the Universal Periodic Review, ensuring that the report of each state clearly (i) mentions their commitment to the promotion of human rights education and learning, (ii) includes the progress made in the implementation of human rights education and learning at the national level, and (iii) indicates any relevant national policies.

4. Incorporate the above-mentioned 3 measures in the process of implementation of operative paragraph 6 of General Assembly Resolution 60/251 that reads that the Council shall; “assume, review and, where necessary, improve and rationalize all mandates, mechanisms, functions and responsibilities of the Commission on Human Rights in order to maintain a system of special procedures, expert advice and a complaint procedure; the Council shall complete this review within one year after the holding of its first session”.

- - - - -