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Submission by the Finnish Human Rights Centre (NHRI)

Ref.: Call for submissions - HRC resolution 39/17: National human rights institutions

Please find attached the submission by the Finnish NHRI for the preparation of the OHCHR report (June 2019) on the key role of NHRIs as enabler for the realisation of the 2030 Agenda. Our submission focuses on human rights education component of indicator 4.7.1 and the indicator 10.3.1 with regard to discrimination of persons with disabilities.

The Finnish Human Rights Center (HRC) is an autonomous and independent expert institution whose task is to promote and monitor the implementation of fundamental and human rights in Finland as well as to increase cooperation and exchange of information between various actors in the field. According to its founding legislation, one of the tasks of the HRC is to participate in European and international cooperation related to the promotion and protection of fundamental and human rights. **The HRC forms the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), alongside with its pluralistic 38-member Human Rights Delegation and the Parliamentary Ombudsman.** The HRC represents the Finnish NHRI in international NHRI cooperation.

The National Human Rights Institution in Finland was established by law in 2012, and received **A-status in 2014.**

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This document was adopted electronically and bears no signature.

Human rights education component of SDG indicator 4.7.1 (Extent to which human rights are mainstreamed, at all levels in national education policies, curricula, teacher education and student assessment)

The Finnish Human Rights Centre (HRC) conducted a **national baseline study** on the implementation of human rights education and training in Finland. The national baseline study reviewed national guidelines in all the different sectors of education. Moreover, the study evaluated the teacher's educator's and trainer's professional abilities on human rights education and training. The HRC's work for the promotion of human rights education was and is for a large part based on the findings of the baseline study.

The HRC advocated for the inclusion of human rights education **into the national action plan on fundamental and human rights**, which the Government of Finland drew up for the second time for 2017-2019.

The HRC also **monitored and commented the drafting of the revised national core curriculum**. In our statement issued to the Finnish National Board of Education on the draft core curriculum for upper secondary education, we emphasized the role of human rights as legally binding international norms, as well as fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution.

The HRC has also developed **human rights education materials**. The materials contain written materials and video lectures covering national, European and UN human rights mechanisms and structure. Individuals as well as educational institution especially in the secondary and higher level have used these materials. In addition to providing materials, The HRC gives **lectures** in educational institutions and for Government officials on regular basis.

In all its activities for the promotion of human rights education, The HRC has **reached out to education and training professionals as well as NGOs working for human rights education to develop partnerships**. The partnerships have resulted in various actions. Together with some NGOs the HRC has had for example an exhibition at the nation's largest annual educational fair "Educa" reaching thousands of teachers.

In order to better **service teachers and leadership of the educational sector**, the HRC and the Parliamentary Ombudsman have carried out a project based on the identified areas in which human rights education is needed and then provide **targeted training**. In 2017, inspections to schools were made with this in mind.

Furthermore, the HRC has initiated and supported efforts to increase and develop **human rights education in the universities** offering teaching in educational sciences. Currently the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Helsinki is piloting a special course on democracy and human rights education, which is made available in other universities as well.

To promote **research into human rights education** the HRC has initiated fundraising for an academic chair devoted to research in democracy and human rights education. The University of Helsinki has welcomed this initiative.

Finally, the HRC has discussed the question of **assessment of human rights education** with the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, which is an independent agency responsible for the national evaluation of education, covering the education system in its entirety. The discussion have focused on giving human rights more systematic attention in the evaluation process.

SDG indicator 10.3.1 (Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law).

In Finland, the tasks of the independent mechanism under article 33.2 of the CRPD are the responsibilities of the Human Rights Centre, its Human Rights Delegation and the Parliamentary Ombudsman, which together form Finland's national human rights institution (NHRI).

The Finnish Human Rights Centre (HRC) defines monitoring in the context of the CRPD as referring to the collation and analysis of information relating to the implementation of obligations under the Convention and the use of the information to support enhanced implementation of the obligations in the future.

In particular, the HRC gathers monitoring data around three themes:

- Progress in the implementation of the CRPD obligations
- Deficiencies in the implementation of the CRPD obligations
- Challenges in the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities

The situation with regard to the availability of data varies from one area of life to another. In all areas of life, however, there is a lack of comprehensive data and information pertaining to personal experiences of persons with disabilities regarding the fulfilment and enjoyment of their rights. This is a significant gap in data availability – and it applies to various other vulnerable groups as well.

For example, considering the SDG indicator 10.3.1, data and statistics from the Equality Bodies and Ombudsmen do not provide a fully accurate picture of the situation, because of underreporting. That is, not all persons, who experience discrimination or harassment, report the incident to the appropriate authority.

In short, in addition to official statistics and data made available by the authorities, we need data from the grass roots level: data that encompasses the everyday experiences of those whose rights we are monitoring.

The manner in which the HRC attempts to overcome the gap in data collection is by complementing its general monitoring activities with online surveys. One example of such an activity is an online survey on the situation of rights of persons with disabilities carried out in 2018. We drafted and carried out the survey in close cooperation with the Finnish Disability Forum (an umbrella organisation of 30 DPOs). Altogether over 2000 persons with disabilities responded to the survey. Accordingly, the results of the survey provide us with reliable grass roots data not only on e.g. personal experiences of discrimination of persons with disabilities, but also on specific areas of life where such experiences have occurred.

The survey data complements the monitoring activities of the HRC by providing additional insights into shortcomings in implementation of rights. Furthermore, this enables the HRC to engage in more focused and improved promotional activities.
