

Human Rights Council – 57th Session

Joint Statement for the Panel discussion on quality education for peace and tolerance for every child

Mr. President,

This statement is on behalf of the Core Group and co-sponsors of Human Rights Council resolution 56/5 on free education.

We are firmly committed to the full realization of the right to education and emphasize its power to foster peace, tolerance, mutual understanding and social stability. We believe in a better future through the empowerment of every child, through providing free, inclusive, and quality public education.

We worry about the stagnation in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all – there can be no quality education for peace and tolerance without realizing this goal.

According to UNICEF, only an estimated 45 per cent of children worldwide complete secondary school, and more than 175 million children are left behind at the pre-primary level. The cost of education and social inequality remain a significant barrier, preventing children from attending school, especially girls. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, civil society and education scholars all agree.

A fourth Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child will legally bind states parties to provide free pre-primary and secondary education for all. This will provide an opportunity to inculcate values of peace and tolerance in children, from an early age through to secondary education.

We urge all parties to engage constructively in the work of the forthcoming Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to extend the right to free education.

Thank you.

(255 words)