

Historic UN resolution urges States to regulate education providers and support public education

Press release, 11th July 2016

Regulate education providers and invest in public education, urged the UN Human Rights Council ([UNHRC](#)) in a [historic resolution](#) made public on Friday, and welcomed by 21 civil society organisations.

The resolution, which was adopted during the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council (13 June to 1 July 2016), urges all States to “**address any negative impacts of the commercialization of education**”, in particular by putting in place a regulatory framework to regulate and monitor education providers, holding accountable providers which negatively impact the right to education, and supporting research.

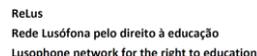
“Other UN human rights bodies, such as the [UN Special rapporteur on the right to education](#) and [UN monitoring bodies](#) have already raised serious concerns regarding the explosive and unregulated growth of private education providers. This resolution adds a strong political statement from States, that cannot leave any doubt: States have human rights obligations to adequately regulate private actors and to resist commercialisation of education” explained Delphine Dorsi from the Right to Education Project.

The resolution follows up on a [previous resolution](#) from June 2015 that were addressing some of the same issues, but **this time includes the need to address commercialisation in the core of the text.**

Sylvain Aubry, from the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, commented: *“In some countries, in particular in the Global South, private schooling has been multiplied sometimes by ten in the last decade, with [commercial chains](#) of for-profit private schools targeting poor people [burgeoning](#) in Kenya, Ghana, The Philippines and other countries. This resolution constitutes a breakthrough because it unambiguously acknowledges that the commercialisation of education raises serious human rights concerns that must be dealt with urgently.”*

Boaz Waruku, from the Africa Network Campaign for Education for All (ANCEFA) underlined that: *“The resolution specifies that even education providers operating in partnership with States must be adequately regulated by States. This is a crucial reminder to States such as [Liberia](#), which are considering [controversial](#) outsourcing of their education systems, to private actors that a public-private partnership [cannot](#) be a way out of their human rights obligations.”*

According to Javier González, a Chilean researcher from the Centre of Development Studies at the University of Cambridge, this resolution *“is also crucial for the academic community. It urges us to focus and increase our research efforts on a critical social transformation, that is, the privatisation and commercialisation in education, which is putting basic human rights at risk.”*



In an unprecedented move, the resolution also urges States to “**recogniz[e] the significant importance of investment in public education to the maximum of available resources**” and to “**increase and improve domestic and external financing for education**” so as to “**contribute to education as a public good**”.

Camilla Croso, President of the Global Campaign for Education, emphasised: “*The [International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity](#), which is finalising its recommendations to the UN Secretary-General, must consider States’ legal obligations to deliver the right to education, as recalled by the UNHRC. States must increase domestic and international financing of public education; any financing solution that could undermine the notion of education as a public good runs against international human rights law, and contrary to this resolution.*”

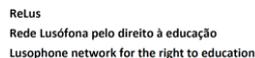
Silvia Alonso, coordinator of the Civil Advocacy Network in Education, the Mexican member of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education, said: “*The new resolution underlines States’ commitments and obligations to strengthen public education systems, which is especially important due to the growing phenomenon of privatisation of public education, that is in many cases hidden. It has been happening in Mexico and several countries in our region, and it often involves the transfer of public resources to for-profit private education initiatives.*”

The resolution was adopted by consensus of the 47 [member](#) States of the UNHRC, signalling the strength of the support for the resolution.

Reacting to the resolution, whose negotiations were led by Portugal, the Project Coordinator of the Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education and [Lusophone Network for the Right to Education](#) (ReLus) focal point, Maria Rehder, declared: “*This resolution, which is aligned with the latest [recommendations](#) on Brazil from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, is an important step for all groups that integrate the ReLus to strengthen our fight against the privatization of public education at the national level.*” Albertino Delgado, ReLus focal point with the Rede Nacional de Campanha de Educação para Todos de Cabo Verde confirmed: “*Our network will keep making pressure on States to hold them accountable for their basic education obligations, and ask them to discourage commercialization of education and address social inequalities.*”

“*We are now calling on all States around the world to implement their legal obligations and to follow their political commitments by stopping their financial support to commercial private schools and taking all steps to develop free, quality, public education systems. In particular, donors such as the [World Bank](#) and the [United Kingdom](#), which have been funding commercial education providers in poor countries, must listen to the Human Rights Council and stop these detrimental practices*”, concluded Carole Coupez, from Solidarité Laïque, an organisation which is a leading member of the French Coalition Education and is working as part of a [francophone network against commercialisation in education](#).

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Key documents

- Resolution A/HRC/32/L.33 from the Human Rights Council on the right to education: <http://bit.ly/HRCEducation2016>.
- Summary of key paragraphs of the resolution addressing private education: <http://bit.ly/HRCEduc2016Sum>.
- Press release on the 2015 resolution of the UNHRC addressing privatisation in education: <http://bit.ly/1NzfTEen>.
- An overview of human rights concerns regarding the growth of private actors in education: <http://bit.ly/privatisationproject> and <http://www.right-to-education.org/issue-page/privatisation-education>.

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Statement endorsed by

- ActionAid
- Africa Network Campaign for Education for All (ANCEFA)
- Amnesty International
- Campanha Nacional pelo Direito à Educação (Brasil)
- Coalition Education (France)
- Global Campaign for Education (GCE)
- Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Grupo informal de investigadores/as portugueses defensores do Direito à Educação (Portugal)
- International Federation of Ceméa (FICEMEA)
- Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE)
- Movimento de Educação para Todos (Mozambique)
- National Union of Teachers (UK)
- Oxfam
- Public Services International (PSI)
- Rede Angolana da Sociedade Civil de Educação para Todos (Angola)
- Rede da Campanha de Educação para Todos – Guiné-Bissau
- Rede Nacional da Campanha de Educação para Todos - Cabo Verde
- Rede Nacional da Campanha de Educação para Todos de São Tomé e Príncipe
- Right to Education Forum, India
- Right to Education Project
- Solidarité Laïque
- The Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy