



Global Education Ministers Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum on Addressing Hate Speech through Education

Organized by UNESCO in collaboration with the United Nations Office on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect (OSAPG)

CONCEPT NOTE

1. Background

On 18 June 2019, the [UN Secretary General launched the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech](#), with a view to enhance the United Nations' response to the global phenomenon of hate speech. In recent months, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the pertinence of this Strategy and Plan of Action, generating a wave of hate speech across the world – further exacerbating xenophobia, racism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of intolerance and discrimination ([UN, 2020](#)). The COVID-19 crisis has also reinforced the need to protect the right to education for all, notably the most vulnerable. Education is a powerful tool to address and counter hate speech, through its ability to instil, *inter alia*, values of respect for human rights and diversity, social justice and gender equality, as well as providing learners with the necessary skills and competencies for critical thinking and to challenge those that promote hatred.

The [United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech](#) places specific emphasis on the role of education as a tool for addressing hate speech. Strengthening educational responses to build the resilience of learners to exclusionary rhetoric and hate speech also lies at the core of the [Education 2030 Agenda](#), and more specifically [target 4.7 of Sustainable Development Goal 4 \(SDG 4\)](#), which touches on the social, moral and humanistic purposes of education.

In support of the Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, UNESCO, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect (OSAPG), is preparing to convene a **'Global Education Ministers Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum on addressing hate speech through education'** (on 30 September – 1st October the Forum and 26 October 2021 the Ministerial Conference) that will be preceded by a series of global initiatives and consultations.

The Global Ministerial Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum will be take place online over several sessions, consisting of a high-level ministerial conference and multi-stakeholder dialogues. The online Global Ministerial Conference will provide an opportunity for debate and strengthen Member States' commitment to address and counter hate speech through education; whilst the Multi-stakeholder Forum will enable fruitful exchange on good practice, from a range of stakeholders (with specific focus on youth-led and women-led organizations, as well as the role of social media companies); with a view to develop a strategy to mobilize and strengthen Member States' capacity to address and counter hate speech, both on and off-line, through education. The summaries of these discussions will be brought together at the end of the Global Ministerial Conference, which will conclude with an online high level segment – in the presence of Ministers of Education, the UN Secretary-General, the Director General of UNESCO and the Special Adviser on Genocide Prevention.

2. Goal

Scale up Member States' educational responses to address and counter hate speech holistically, with a view to reduce its impact and reach.

3. Objectives and expected outcomes

The *'Global Education Ministers Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum on addressing hate speech through education'*, will provide an opportunity for the first global and multi-stakeholder discussion on education as a tool for addressing hate speech. It will bring together youth representatives, women-led organizations, civil society, the UN system, heads of technology and social media companies, as well as Ministers of Education, with a view to develop actionable recommendations for addressing hate speech through education.

Specific objectives:

- To present Member States with evidence on the scope and harmful effects of hate speech;
- To highlight effective rights-based measures to address and counter hate speech through education, including national and regional good practices and lessons learned related to media and information literacy and global citizenship education;
- To strengthen and promote Member States' commitment to address and counter hate speech through education in line with the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech; and
- To produce a concluding statement of the *'Global Education Ministers Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum on addressing hate speech through education'*, with follow-up measures to ensure effective implementation at regional and national levels.

The concrete expected outcomes are:

- Final conclusions with actionable recommendations.
- High-level political leaders' and eminent personalities' pledges to deliver on the actionable recommendations.
- Development of a policy guide aimed at education policy-makers on how to address and counter hate speech through education.

4. Participants – by invitation

- High-level representatives of Member States, including Ministries of Education
- UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes, as well as other multilateral organisations
- Regional organizations
- Civil society organizations
- Teachers
- Academia and think tanks
- Private sector, including tech and social media companies
- Youth and student representatives

Participants will be invited to register online, and upon registration will receive a link to the relevant online session.

5. Working languages

It is important to note that the technical segment (i.e the working session of the Global Ministerial Conference) and **the Multi-stakeholders Forum** will be conducted in **English, French and Spanish** with simultaneous interpretation. However, it is envisioned that during the high-level segment of the **Global Ministerial Conference**, simultaneous interpretation will be available in the **six official languages of the United Nations** (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

Working documents will be made available in English and French. The concluding Statement will subsequently be translated into all six UN official languages.

6. Series of Global Initiatives associated to the ‘Global Education Ministers Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum on addressing hate speech through education’

Series of Global Initiatives leading to the Global Education Ministers Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum on addressing hate speech through education 2020 – 2021			
Activity	Status	Synopsis	Timeline
Phase 1: Consultations / Research / Policy guidance			
1. Preparatory Expert Meeting on Addressing Hate Speech through Education	[Completed]	<i>Brought together leading experts, which included youth representatives. This meeting served to inform the content and design of the ‘Global Education Ministers Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum on addressing hate speech through education’. The Experts also provided key actionable recommendations for the consideration of Member States.</i>	13 – 18 May 2020
2. Member States’ Online Survey	<i>Ready to be launched in October 2020</i>	Mapping Member States’ Actions to Address and Counter Hate Speech Through Education (1) to explore the extent to which Member States are addressing hate speech at country level: and (2) to explore the extent to which Ministries of Education are implementing specific measures to address and counter hate speech through education.	December 2020 – April 2021
3. Online surveys with CSOs, Teachers and Youth.	[Pending]	These series of surveys will be launched simultaneously with a view to gather the perspective of these different constituencies and identify key trends and good practices on using education to tackle hate speech.	August – October 2021
4. Research on monitoring & mapping of online hate speech	[Pending]	This research will focus on examining global trends, and specifically on COVID-19 related hate speech in conflict prone countries; with a view to better understand hate speech trends and root causes for the development of educational responses/interventions.	April – December 2021
5. Working Papers on Addressing Hate Speech	[Pending]	These short working papers will act as think pieces to generate global discussions on different approaches to address and counter hate speech, and in particular through education.	<i>[With a view to publish a paper once every two months, commencing from September 2021].</i>
6. Policy Guide on Addressing Hate Speech through Education	[Pending]	Seek to provide education stakeholders with guidance on education policies, practices and pedagogies which Member States have at disposal or can develop to address and counter hate speech while promoting the freedom of expression and opinion.	<i>[(to be published after the Conference & Forum, based on the outcomes)]</i>
Phase 2: Global Education Ministers Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum			
Multi-stakeholder Forum	[Pending]	This series of online high-level discussions will bring together CSOs, youth, women-led organizations, tech and social media companies, technical level governmental representatives, with a view to promote meaningful engagement and identify key areas for action.	30 September – 1 st October 2021
Online Global Ministerial Conference	[Pending]	This will entail a technical segment and a high-level segment, in the presence of the UNSG, DG, and Ministers of ED in which a concluding statement will be produced. <i>In-person Official Ceremonies to Launch/Recall the concluding statement could be organized at UNGA 2021 and UNESCO General Conference 2021.</i>	26 October 2021
Phase 3: Roll-out and implementation activities			

Awareness-raising and advocacy	[Pending]	Series of 5 regional consultations with Member States and civil society to inform relevant stakeholders about research findings, guidance, global political commitments and to advocate in favour of the development of national action plans. Creation of regional networks of ministries of education focal points	January – December 2022
National capacity-building	[Pending]	Launch of national activities with focus on teacher training and curriculum revision	January – December 2022
Phase 4: Awareness-raising and Outreach (concomitant with phase 1 & 2 & 3)			
Global communication campaign	[Pending]	Media and social media campaign focused on awareness raising and advocacy, highlighting the forthcoming the ' <i>Global Education Ministers Conference and Multi-stakeholder Forum on addressing hate speech through education</i> ', as well as relevant lead-up activities.	August 2021 – April 2022

7. Follow-up regional and national activities

The Global Ministerial Conference & Multi-stakeholder Forum and the concluding Statement will serve as a basis for a series of follow-up activities to be implemented on the national and regional levels.

UNESCO and OSAPG, with relevant partners will engage in a long-term series of educational initiatives tailored to the specific needs of Member States to address and counter hate speech at national level. Specific measures will be determined in partnership with national governments, key stakeholders, UNESCO field offices and other IGO's representation.

This will entail the following steps:

- Series of regional consultations and capacity-building workshops;
- Development of national action plans to address and counter hate speech through education, as well as the establishment of regional networks of Focal Points on Hate Speech, appointed within Ministries of Education;
- Roll-out of national action plans; and
- Support for social media campaigns to address and counter hate speech at national level.