



FINAL ACT

on the side event of the

**New challenge in the fight against poverty
The right to Apprenticeship through the right to education**

**19th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council
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Held in Geneva on 20 March from 12.00 to 14.00.

Dr Alpha DRAME (Secretary General of ASF) takes the floor:

The purpose of this conference is to see through which mechanism we can make the right to apprenticeships a right recognised by the UN. It should be noted that the purpose is not the disregard all the effort that has been obtained as part of the right to education, but rather to bring a new dimension to the right to education which is the right to apprenticeship. Apprenticeship represents for ASF a means that allows students to obtain a training and then a job.

Mr Biro DIAWARA (Representative of ASF at the UN, Interfaith International, and programme officer of RADHHO at Geneva) takes the floor:

The association ASF joined the family of NGOs as of June 2010. It was accepted at the ECOSOC as an observer with a special status. Immediately after its admission, at the 15th session of the HR council, ASF sent a written communication; which you can find in the document A/HRC/15NGO/43 on the site of the Council under the name ASF at the third point: Economic, social and cultural rights.

The theme of this conference is the realisation of apprenticeships through the right to education. This is the new challenge within current world crisis. The association ASF has for purpose the promotion of development through cooperation between the North and the South, the transfer of know-how between Switzerland and the developing countries. We believe that the model of Swiss apprenticeship is an excellent example of a system which deserves a transfer to the developing countries in order to contribute to the reduction of poverty but also to the problem of youth unemployment, this representing a major challenge today, one to which many countries are confronted.

The association has already realised a few pilot projects which are operational in Guinea, Mali, Togo, Mauritania, and the programme called Solar Net Africa is developing. The purpose of the project is to reduce the technological gap and to promote the connectivity between young people in developing countries through new IT technology, and thus create new job opportunities for them.

The world financial crisis has aggravated the situation. Young people are the most touched by this situation: more than 75 million unemployed in the world are young people and women. One hundred and fifty million minimum wage young workers in developing countries and developed countries equally have no hope in the current global governance system. At its 110th session in March 2011, the Administration Council of The International Labour Bureau has listed the issue of youth employment crisis on the agenda of the next international labour conference which will be held at the end of May in Geneva.

The agenda of this conference will debate essentially the issue of the challenges to the crisis of youth unemployment. Apprenticeship comes as a solution to this problem. Personal development through apprenticeship allows the creations of new opportunities for youth since it focuses their competences. Today's youth are victims of policies of which they are not responsible. In his presentation at the World Economic Forum at Davos in January 2011 on the theme "Avoid the loss of a generation", the director of ILO, Juan Samovia, has placed a particular accent on the primordial role of education, training and the youth employment market today in developing countries. One of the real problems is the adequacy between labour market and training market. What we do is enabling the training of the future unemployed to avoid them to be discharged on the street without real opportunities. So how can we solve this problem?



One of ASF's purposes is to bring all the partners in development, States and organisations of the civil society to reflect together and identify ways of solving this youth unemployment crisis which represents a real problem for security and long term stability worldwide.

If we look at countries such as Germany, Austria, Denmark, Norway or Switzerland, which have developed over many years a dual apprenticeship system that combines not only schooling but also training in a company for a better match of skills; these countries have not encountered these problems today. Thus, apprenticeship represents for us a durable alternative solution to respond to youth unemployment. We invite then developing countries to develop the following strategies:

- raise their investment in the employment sector
- offer scholarships for training
- offer subventions to employers
- create services that facilitate the transition between two jobs, including career orientation which will favourably help to solve the problems that youth are confronted with today in this crisis that hits all countries, including developed countries which search for adequate solutions.

The International Labour Bureau has launched since the beginning of this year consultations in more than 40 countries regarding the problem of youth unemployment. There will be a youth forum from the 23-25 May 2012 to exchange information and experiences.

Dr Alpha DRAME (Secretary General of ASF) takes the floor:

In developing countries worldwide there is an education system which is connected to states such as France, Great Britain or Spain. All the countries have historically an education system which is modelled on the colonial system and it is generally elitist, which leaves aside those who do not have the capacities to accede to a formation. In developing countries, the right to education exists but more than 80% of the economy is in the informal sector which comprises all the non recognized trainings. When the economic system functions, young people are better trained. The classical training model allows recognizing somebody who has gone to school and has followed the normal curriculum without any work related link. The Swiss dual model allows one to have 4 days of work and 2 days of training. We are thus asking that there is an adequacy between a model that has proved itself, namely the Swiss dual model and any system worldwide in need of recognition.

As we speak of a right to education, it's a way of recognising that apprenticeship is training but first and foremost employment. This employment reinforces human dignity hence valorising apprenticeships we valorise the informal sector in developing countries. Hence talking about the right to education through apprenticeship allows us to fill in the gaps and boost an economy in developing countries by valorising youth employment which can be recognised as a valuable formation- the purpose of this conference. We need then that countries develop policies that encourage the fact that training in the informal sector can be valued and recognised through the right to education.

Mr Ueli LEUENBERGER (Swiss National councilor, President of the commission of Swiss institutions which deal with immigration, Member of the Federal Commission of the Office for Vocational Guidance, President of the Greens Switzerland) takes the floor:

The Swiss federal system is a complicated system but in general, it simplifies our life in the long term: stability of the political situation in the country, for instance. The competences of Swiss authorities are limited to compulsory schooling in the domain of education which comprises of primary and secondary for students up to the age of 16.



The Swiss system as such is not a unique system even if harmonisation processes in the last decades have brought together the cantons. Switzerland comprises 26 different educational systems, one for each canton, and even half canton. The important structural characteristics have been fixed through inter-cantonal accords.

Professional training, on the other hand, is a task of the Confederation, of the cantons and of the organisations from the job market such as employers associations and trade unions. These three partners associate their efforts for a quality professional formation and for a sufficient offer of apprenticeships and continued training. Professional training allows youth to start in the work field and assures their training as professionals, executives and managers. It is oriented towards the labour market and integrated in the educational system. The initial professional training, more known under the name of apprenticeship is a compulsory post secondary school training which allows obtaining a federal certificate of competences (CFC). It takes place either in trade schools or in a dual mode- in an enterprise with regular classes in a vocational school. The training can be completed through a professional maturity exam which one can obtain at the end of an apprenticeship or by finishing ones' apprenticeship through supplementary courses.

For a few years, there also exists a two year apprenticeship called Initial Professional Training which allows obtaining a federal attestation. This attestation, even though less extensive than an apprenticeship still allows searching for a job or the continuation of normal professional training starting with the second year of apprenticeship. Two thirds of young people in Switzerland do an apprenticeship. This offers them numerous professional opportunities. The dual apprenticeship model is the most common: 230 trainings are open to apprentices in Switzerland. The trainings offered are not only focused on the existent professional qualifications but also on the existing employment opportunities. Access to the labour market serves as link between the training companies and the labour market. As a result, Switzerland can boast with having one of the smallest youth unemployment rate in Europe.

Following these positive elements, there is nonetheless concern in Switzerland about the discrimination of young foreigners looking for apprenticeship. A study of the National Swiss Fund published five years ago, showed that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) apply unequal treatment with regards to gender and nationality when they select their apprentices. In Switzerland, 90% of apprenticeships are from SMEs while large companies apply a procedure that usually provides a successful application, with an aptitude test. The selection schema of SMEs is the same, but it is applied in a more disparate way. Hence, the decision to not keep a candidate is first and foremost determined by doubts regarding his or hers ability to suit the company. Foreign youth are often disadvantaged. In Geneva, the situation is more favourable regarding discrimination. Those who are disadvantaged do not come from the EU, but from former Yugoslavia or Turkey which represent a fairly large part of labour force in Switzerland. One in 20 people in Switzerland come from former Yugoslavia. There has been a long history of immigration.

The reasons given are most often language and schooling deficits of these young people, even though the study shows that school results of the youth involved did not play an important role in the attribution of an apprenticeship place. The real reasons to not keep a candidate are rather emotional, to not use harsh words. There is a concern that foreign youth create conflicts within the company which customers would deem undesirable. The discrimination of foreign youth on the apprenticeship market in Switzerland is unacceptable for many but it is, unfortunately, a fact. This is even more common in the Swiss German part where xenophobic campaigns against former Yugoslavia and Turkey have an impact.



This situation is humanly unacceptable, unnecessary and even tantamount to a waste of resources resulting in long term enormous social costs. Since there are a higher percentage of early school leavers with foreign background, the problem threatens to get worse. The studies show that only schooling deficits cannot explain the discrimination of young people of foreign background. Youth with a foreign name have less chances of finding a place than their Swiss classmates, even if their school results are the same or superior. Biases play a more important role with respect to certain groups of people, especially those from the Balkans or Turkey. These young people are suspected of causing problems inside the companies but it has been largely proven that this is not the case.

Discrimination has important consequences for the foreign youth but also for the society and the economy. It is naturally the former that suffers the immediate consequences. They live the frustration of failing by seeing their candidacy refused. Afterwards, they have started any training, or worse, they have no projects. If this situation continues, it becomes refractory, and with young people without training, poorly trained or trained in a profession that does not correspond to their tastes, we thus manufacture unskilled workers earning a low income. It is exactly this group of workers which is exposed to a high risk of unemployment, disability or health problems, the costs of which are enormous to the society.

But the economy is also strongly touched. On one side, this discrimination of foreign youth leads to hiring not the best apprentices but the best Swiss apprentices. On the other hand, a number of youth are not formed in adequate professions or are not formed at all. Discrimination reinforces the lack of qualified labour force, a deficit which is already predictable. This leads to poor management of our key resources, training and qualification of workers.

Discrimination of young people on the labour market is not trivial. Today, already, on the Swiss labour market, the proportion of these young people is a quarter of pupils completing the compulsory education, if not more. In the next ten years, this rate will go up a third, if not half, in urban regions. If the training enterprises do not change their attitude, a great number of young people will be affected at the end of their compulsory education and the negative effects mentioned above will rise in consequence. The training system through apprenticeship in Switzerland raises a big interest world wide. Swiss authorities are aware of this situation but there is still a problem because a minority is frequently discriminated in the search of an apprenticeship.

The system of training through apprenticeship in Switzerland is definitely an example which raises a lot of interest in the world but it is also a system whose efficacy is today partially touched by the influence of a rising current of xenophobia which brings with it discriminatory practices. The discrimination of young people on the labour market is a time bomb, and only the action of the authorities, trade unions and professional associations and businesses in collaboration with civil society will ease the situation.

Mr Grégoire EVEQUOZ (Branch of the Office for Vocational Training and Orientation) takes the floor:

The system of education in Switzerland is a federal system with cantonal particularities. The dual apprenticeship is a recipe with six ingredients: Firstly, an apprenticeship plan is needed, recognised on a federal level- an enterprise which offers a working place, because the apprenticeship contract is first and foremost a work contract. In France, we speak of alternation, first training, and then employment through apprenticeships. With dual training, we start from the work force and go to training. One hundred years ago, there was no formal education, there was employment and then progressively training was included in apprenticeship.



There is also the need for a person, a contract, a school and an authority (public in Switzerland), but this can be a professional association or a collective, a city, a region that provides control over these elements. There are more than 230 plans of apprenticeships in Switzerland and they define what is necessary in the practice of employment and training. They are written by professional associations and they correspond to the needs of the economy. We see then the adequacy between the needs of the economy and apprenticeship.

There are professional environments which define themselves what they need with regards to apprenticeship, which is the key to success. The apprenticeship plan defines the requirements and the practices. A plan requires that more professionals meet together and agree, it is for this reason that we talk about a plan of apprenticeships that is negotiated and recognised.

The enterprise is the central factor of training. In Geneva and in Switzerland, 60% of enterprises which form the ensemble of apprenticeships are enterprises with 1 to 3 employees. This information shows that apprenticeships are well adapted to the economic structures of the economy where there are Small and Middle Enterprises (SMEs). In Switzerland, 80% of apprentices are thus formed by SMEs.

It is also the company that pays the apprentices: from 500 to 1000 CHF depending on the job for the first year of apprentices. One year of apprenticeship costs on average 26000 CHF for one apprentice and brings the company 28000 CHF. There is thus a benefit for each young person in training of 2000 CHF. If we multiply this number by the 200.000 places for apprenticeships, we obtain the amount that apprenticeships bring to Switzerland. We see then that it is a productive sector and thus something that interests the developing countries but also the countries in Europe which find themselves in difficult budgetary situations. 40% of the professional training is financed by the economy (in Switzerland). There are 200.000 apprentices out of which 5000 in Geneva which represent 25% of youth in an age range. The school is public but the teachers have a professional background. And this works because there is a learning contract that formalizes the relationship between the parties.

In Yaoundé, Cameroun, we are putting in place the first public service orientation for the industries, employers and unions which fear that the apprentice is exploited. In Switzerland, the system reduces this risk through the apprenticeship contract. The supervisor is the canton which has the power from the Confederation to monitor that the apprenticeship goes well and that it is a quality one.

A recent study done by the OECD (Organisation for Cooperation and Economic Development) on the Swiss system of apprenticeship shows the strong points of the system: the adequacy between the needs of the employers and the needs of the market as regards training: it is a partnership that works well. There is no professional training without a partnership. The theory and the practice side are well integrated. The benefits outweigh the costs of training. The teachers, the experts and the trainers are well informed. Quality control is guaranteed and mobility and flexibility are well developed- young people can go to a tertiary level training which is also, increasingly, the case today.

Questions:

Mr Boris ENGELSON, independent Journalist: “Are we ready to tackle the real problem which is the maintained prestige, imposed by abstract university branches? And don't we have to confront the fact that our educational religion and our respect for the academic branches do more harm than good, including in Geneva? The question is to know if we should push people to follow PhDs when we know that they will become unemployed and not that smart either. We are doing the contrary of what the analysis of Ivan Illich suggests. We cannot valorise apprenticeships without devaluing the sciences from which the titles of those who lead us come from.”



Developing countries suffer from the fact that they have been influenced by the colonizers. The establishment of an elite education was set in place. But Switzerland did not have any colonies and the apprenticeship system we see in Switzerland - where one goes to the employer 4 times a day and 1 day to school with a CFC or a professional maturity exam to be able to go to university- was not experienced in developing countries. For instance, we can start as a pharmacist and then have a PhD in biochemistry. The idea is to bring the right to training through an apprenticeship at the level of the right to education; to revalue the apprenticeship, which belongs to all cultures.

Research assistant, Geneva: “What do the training companies win and what is the financial support of the state?” Second question: “What can we do against foreign youth discrimination to training and the labour market in Switzerland so that these young people can access it?”

International alliance of Women: My question is related to the last, as regards discrimination of young people in this country. What are the research and advocacy done in this area? What concrete measures do you recommend to fighting this discrimination, given the fact that the number of youth unemployment of African immigrants is high in Switzerland?

Replies given by the panel:

Mr Evequoz: In Switzerland, the average of a dual formation costs the state 15'000 CHF and the rest is paid by the company.

Mr Leueberger: There are different attack points on discrimination, on one side-the authorities at all levels participate more or less strongly on the information campaigns. The cantons do this more or less well. Many things are also done at the level of communes. There is obviously the whole issue of integration that is there to avoid having problems in society. On the other hand, we must fight openly xenophobic and racist campaigns. It differs greatly from region to region and it is not a secret that where xenophobic parties are particularly active and use random facts about the involvement of a foreigner (even if maybe the person has been living in Switzerland for a long time or even if he is born here) which are then taken by the media with an influence in the campaigns to recruit apprentices.

Mme Claire DE LAVERNETTE (Permanent Representative at the UN- International Organisation for the Right to Education and Freedom of Teaching) takes the floor:

We are going to look now at apprenticeships from the point of view of its articulation with the right to education. What is apprenticeship? What do we understand by apprenticeship? The Swiss Social Politics dictionary defines it as a *dual formation done simultaneously in an enterprise and in a vocational school*. The Petit Robert dictionary is relatively deceiving because it says that it is the *ensemble of exercises preparing young people for a profession, principally a manual formation* which is already too concise.

Another definition, the one we can read in the Practical Encyclopaedia on Education, from 1960, says that apprenticeship is something different from manual training. The instruction given in the workshops is both manual and for the brain and that the strongest ally of the master is the intelligence of the pupil. There is a whole philosophy underlying this that shows that before any manual labour, there is first an intellectual labour. Concerning normative terms and international norms, we found 9 in total. We will discuss the 4 most important ones. We dare to speak of a right to apprenticeship now and my role is precisely to justify why. As we have seen it above, there is an ambiguity in the definition of apprenticeship and it will thus be necessary to clarify the terms. From now on, we decide on the definition of apprenticeship as a synonym of **Vocational Education and Training**.



These are the very terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). This is different from the term apprenticeship of which we talk a lot, especially in the new notion of Education throughout your life of the European Community. The UDHR in its 26th article which is the founding article on the right to education says that vocational education and training should be generalised. The ICESCR says in its article 13 that *secondary schooling under its different forms, including vocational education and training must be made accessible to everyone through all means and especially through the progressive installation of free education*. The three elements of this education are then:

- a progressive installation of free education;
- a generalization of education (there is here a progressive principle- the states must implement a vocational training system, this is an obligation, however, they are not required to do so immediately, but gradually;
- And finally, it must be made accessible to everybody through all the appropriate means and especially through the progressive installation of free education. This means that all states must do their utmost in terms of financial resources made available.

Art. 28 of the Convention on the right of the child which has been ratified in a very large extent says that *State Parties encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, general and vocational education, their accessibility for every child and the taking of appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education*. Hence we are talking about secondary education as well as vocational education.

Other texts are extremely important on vocational training and education. There is firstly, the Convention on the Vocational Training and Education of UNESCO, implemented in 1991. The expression of Vocational Training and Education for this convention refers to all forms and all levels of education processes where the acquisition of general knowledge, technical studies and related sciences as well as practical skills, attitudes and elements of understanding in relation to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. This is a very complex and long definition. We see here a holistic vision of education. This convention, written in 1989, foresaw the many changes that would come in societies around the world in the field of economic and social life.

We will now move on to the revised recommendation from 2001 by UNESCO concerning vocational education and training. It is a long and detailed text: more than 100 articles but a gold mine for further study of apprenticeships. There are 6 important points in this recommendation which help us move towards the recognition of the right to apprenticeship. First of all, apprenticeship is an integral part of general formation. Point 5 of the recommendation explains this: “Given the incredible scientific, technical and socio-economic evolution characteristic of our time, including globalization and the revolution in information technology and communication; vocational training and education should be a vital aspect of the educational process in all countries”. Thus it is part of the global process of education as a right enshrined in Art. 26 of the UDHR and it is necessary that this type of education must be integrated appropriately at all levels of education.

Then *point b.*, a founding element and it is what Switzerland does so well mentions that apprenticeship it is a means of access to the professional sector and to an effective participation in the workforce. In Switzerland, a young person in apprenticeship can do an engineering school thanks to the existence of gateways.

Point c. talks about an aspect of apprenticeship throughout life. In other instruments, there was a talk of secondary education, and then point 19 of the Recommendation speaks of introduction to technology and the world of work which should be a required program of primary education and of the first years of secondary education. On the other hand, it also says that the system should allow access to other areas of education at all levels, including to institutions of higher education.



Hence we start earlier and we continue after. Article 6 of the recommendation also talks about the recognition of professional experience as being part of apprenticeship and this in order to account for the education of individuals and changes in employment as it is always linked to jobs. Finally, the recommendation takes into account the training of older people. This is something relatively new. It is for a long period which goes from primary school to after our 40s, that vocational education and training makes sense, for all and throughout life.

Then we have *training for a responsible citizenship*. The preamble to the recommendation speaks of redirecting “vocational education and training such that the new requirements related to the objectives of establishing a peace culture, social cohesion and global citizenship are satisfied”.

Point d. talks about an “instrument for promoting sustainable development and respecting the environment“. It also talks about human ecology, in the sense that the technical and vocational education can be adapted to each learner, regardless of its background. The recommendation also lists a long list of people who should be paid attention to: women, girls, disabled, migrants, non schooled youth, refugees etc. What is interesting for the unemployed youth is to think that human ecology can be mean the redevelopment of trades related to learning, including all those lost jobs such as technicians or all type of repairers which is extremely needed. Human ecology allows each individual to profit from his or hers knowledge and talent. Finally, it is a means of facilitating the reduction to poverty. Vocational education has this added value: being in line with the economic and social needs of countries and taking into account the needs of all apprentices. To do this, there is a need for a new partnership with all stakeholders which is very diverse; there is the state, the employers, professional associations, businesses, employees and their representatives-local authorities and NGOs.

The recommendation states that the partnership must create a coherent legislative framework to enable the launching of a national strategy for change, and it falls to states primarily to facilitate the choice between the diversity of public and private providers. The role of civil society and NGOs is widely recognized here.

We are going to end on two sentences taken from this recommendation. Firstly, “The state and the private sector must recognise that technical and vocational education is not an expense but an investment with significant returns including the well being of workers, enhanced productivity and international competitiveness”. But this requires investment in teacher in terms of their salaries as well.

The second phrase is also very important: “Giving a high priority to technical education and professional development programs as well as projects of educational reform”. This requires destroying the barriers between levels and areas of education on the one hand and education and the world of work on the other, and finally between school and society.

To conclude, apprenticeship is a considerable added value and it is a matter of urgency to make it valuable, especially in a world of such fast changes. Apprenticeship was born in the middle Ages with the development of towns and commerce. In France, when the kings had problems with their workforce, they would create technical schools to train engineers or architects, for instance. These technical schools offered comprehensive training and history has shown that this experience has helped improve public education that was given later in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, everything remains to be done, to recreate, to respond to the needs of the modern world and the future but also to allow each apprentice to enjoy the right to education.

**Mr Kishore SINGH (Rapporteur Spécial du Droit à l'Éducation auprès des Nations Unies) takes the floor:**

Talks about the legal framework which exists. Conceptually the right to education means entitlement and universal access to education but also means, and more importantly, empowerment-what does education bring. There is little doubt in saying that apprenticeship is an integral part of vocational education which in turn is very much recognized in the normative framework of the right to education.

Allow me to bring two comments to what Claire has said.

1) The general comment of Art.13 on right to education on the international covenant on economical and social rights is mentioned. The definition is important in understanding the right to apprenticeship. This general comment says that the technical vocational education means skills, knowledge and levels of qualification either in the various sectors of economy. This gives us an understanding of the importance of vocational education.

2) Another definition is important and that is of UNESCO's international standards classification of education: in case of technical and vocational education this definition reports and says it is practical skills, know how, and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or group of occupations. This definition, international recognized definition, and is very important to keep in mind and understand the importance of apprenticeship as part of right to education.

I will briefly try to speak also about the work on UN Human Rights treaty bodies which are responsible for the implementation of the treaties and conventions of UN. All these treaties are connected to the right of non discrimination and equality of rights. The Committee on economic social and cultural rights as a treaty body has stated in its concluding recommendations that economic social and cultural rights must be developed through professional training information responding to the market and market needs. The Committee on rights to child mentions in its concluding observations the need for further legislation with regards to professional, technical and vocational education. And the committee on the rights of the child also recommended similar formation for the children.

Finally, it is very important for us to bear in mind the work of the CEDAW which has stated the importance of boys and girls to education and non discrimination, and more importantly the access to technical and vocational education for girls and women so that they can be integrated, and this is an integral part of right to education in terms of empowerment which I think is more important than health, technical trades or other forms of vocational education.

The concluding recommendations of the treaty bodies of UN are the outcome of the dialogue these treaty bodies have with the state. And that is true also for the Universal Periodic Review. I would like to underline the importance of Africa as a priority in the UN system and the importance of the informal sector. Let me just say that in case of Africa there is a decade of women's empowerment 2010-2012 and they have done a lot of work in putting vocational training to the forefront and give importance to education through empowerment. The decade of women has as a clear project to advance women's skills. I would just like to express my own feeling in the context of need for a new vision in the context of education for all agenda. Targets until 2015 are access for all. Same time targets in the millennium development goals. In that perspective the new vision should go beyond the targets. What beyond 2015? In this context, precisely from the point of view of giving more importance to access to technical and vocational education. But it should not be the end, what is necessary is that when we think of an agenda beyond 2015 we need to think a generalized secondary system going beyond educational system. But until that system obviously technical education should be given high priority.

**Mr Kazunari FUJII (Director, SGI UN Liaison Office/Chair, NGO Working Group on Human Rights) takes the floor**

I was asked to come here and talk about the right to education and apprenticeship. Ms. de Lavernette just mentioned two definitions she found.

I looked into the definition of apprenticeship in Oxford dictionary. It refers to “work for a fixed period at low wages”. It sounds to me the right to work and not the right to education. In my understanding, they will receive an income or salary but at very low wages. Therefore I agree with Mr Singh that apprenticeship is an integral part of vocational education and I also agree with Mme Claire De Lavernette that apprenticeship must be valued. But having heard questions and answers, this concerns also non discrimination and access for all. So, this is very much about human rights. Having all that in mind, 19 December last year the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. I would like to recall the drafting process of the UN Declaration.

It started in September 2007 and then in the very beginning 2007-2008, the NGOs here at the UN talked about the meaning of the right to education. In the beginning, certain states said that Human rights education was part of the right to education and that the right to education included human rights education.

On the other hand, some experts said that the right to education did not include human rights education, they cross each other but they were two separate and different things. One of the human rights standards that the Declaration relies on is Art 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Art 26, paragraph 2, reads “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to strengthening of HR”. This Art is integrated in the preamble paragraph of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. The question here, in the drafting process, was how governments would proceed on the question whether it was or was not a legal obligation for governments to direct education to the full development of the human personality and the human rights. But governments’ answer was that it was not really a legal obligation. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not legally binding upon governments unlike a convention under international law.

In the drafting process, the governmental negotiation process itself was very important. Last year when the Declaration was adapted, there was no government to say human rights education was part of the right to education. Human rights education is to realise human rights of all in all countries and it is about all human rights including the right to education. Civil society actors including NGOs and experts have an important role to advocate and realise that education shall be directed to promote human rights.

Now when we look at the principles of human rights education and training provided in the UN Declaration, Art 1 was originally proposed to provide “the right to human rights education”, which was not retained in the final text. What human rights education means? Art 1, paragraph 3, provides that “(...) in particular the right to education and access to information enables access to human rights education and training”.

Art 2, paragraph 1, further provides with the meaning of human rights education. “Human rights education and training comprises all education activities” and “information activities” as long as they “aim at promoting all human rights and fundamentals freedoms”. Human rights education explained in Art 3 is: education about human rights; education through human rights; and education for human rights. The term “human rights education” in French is “*éducation dans le domaine des droits humains*” or “*éducation aux droits humains*”. In French you don’t really see what you see in the English language.



Human right education means all the three ends, “about”, “through” and “for” human rights. In French you can see only about or in. That could be tricky of languages. *Education through* means that when education takes place, its environment and learning and teaching processes must be respectful for human rights. Education must be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. This must also apply to apprenticeship and vocational education - non-discrimination and equality for all citizens.

Dr Alpha DRAME (Secretary General of ASF) takes the floor:

Apprentissages Sans Frontières (ASF) is an international NGO accredited and with an ECOSOC special status. It fights for the recognition of the right to apprenticeship at the international level. Apprenticeship can be a means of fighting against poverty in developing countries especially as regards to the informal sector. We have seen that there is a Swiss experience. At the Swiss level apprenticeship is recognized and it breaks the barriers between vocational education and university education. We have also heard that apprenticeship has a discriminatory side because foreigners can be discriminated against and that the right to apprenticeship is not applied in a strict manner so that each person who finds herself on Swiss territory can be eligible. Apprenticeship has thus an advantage but there is also an inconvenient- the lack of international law. We further heard that the dual system is effective because it has the advantage of increasing by 40% the economic sector so it is not only the state policy that promotes this learning system and that pays the cost but there is also the economic and the private sector involved in the promotion of learning. This allows a public-private partnership in relation to a recognized vocational training therefore some dignity to employment, and it allows one who has served as an apprentice to go to college and to have his job recognized.

There is a legal armada that allows us to recognize the right to education especially through article 26 of the UDHR. But the right to education is not obligatory; it does not appear systematically in the judicial texts and the treaties. But there is still a legal basis in these texts. Apprenticeship is in the UDHR in art. 26 and it is recognised at this level but seen how the treaties are not binding and that countries do not enforce it strictly, hence there is a need to define a strategy from 2015 that would address these issues more specifically by keeping within general education. This appeared in the intervention of the Special Rapporteur, Mr Singh who brought us his experience explaining the importance of learning in the informal sector in African countries and all the efforts that are made today at UNESCO regarding this right to apprenticeship. There is thus a real importance of apprenticeship in the informal sector in African countries and all efforts are made today with UNESCO over the right to apprenticeship and all is done so that developing countries include in their policies the right to technical training. Finally, we have heard Mr Fujii which has talked about the right to education conceptually. There could well be a difference between the Anglo Saxon definition and the French definition. He also showed us the complexity of the concept of right to education. He has also highlighted the difficulty of the practice of law to education in terms of public policy.

Finally, we have demonstrated through this conference that apprenticeship is an integral part of our culture, with a universal value. Moreover, it exists in developed countries and it has demonstrated its advantage- supporting the economy, providing employment and human dignity to the youth. It may nevertheless have a discriminatory side, for example in Switzerland.

Hence the necessity to develop a treaty on it because talking about the right to apprenticeship is talking about the right to employment and talking about the right to employment is talking about the right to human dignity.

Held in Geneva 20 March 2012