

**Universal Periodic Review**  
**(18<sup>th</sup> session, January – February 2014)**  
**Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information**  
**(to Part I. A. and to Part III F, J, K, and P)**

**Eritrea**

**I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK**

**A. Scope of international obligations: Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO**

I.1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Not state party to this Convention	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. (1989)	Not state party to this Convention			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	Acceptance 24/10/2001			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	Ratified 07/10/2010			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the	Not state party to this Convention			Right to take part in cultural life

Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)				
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**II. Input to Part III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law to items F, J, K, and P**

**Right to education**

**Normative Framework:**

2. Constitutional framework: The Constitution of Eritrea of 1997<sup>1</sup> enshrines the right to education in its Article 21, which states that "Every citizen shall have the right of equal access to publicly funded social services. The State shall endeavor, within the limit of its resources, to make available to all citizens health, education ..."

3. Moreover, Article 14 provides that "1. All persons are equal under the law. 2. No person may be discriminated against on account of race, ethnic origin, language, colour, gender, religion, disability, age, political view, or social or economic status or any other improper factors. 3. The National Assembly shall enact laws that can assist in eliminating inequalities existing in the Eritrean society" and Article 5 specifies that "Without consideration to the wording of any provision in this Constitution with reference to gender, all of its articles shall apply equally to both genders." With regard to languages, Article 4 provides that "the equality of all Eritrean languages is guaranteed."

4. Legislative framework<sup>2</sup>: In accordance with the Legal Notice No. 1 of 1991, concerning regulations enacted to determine the establishment and management of non-government schools and their supervision, the ministry of Education is the organ that implements the educational policies formulated by the State, prepares the national curriculum, and ensures the application of such a curriculum throughout the country.

5. The Legal Notice No. 2 of 1991 contains some regulations enacted to determine the relationships between schools and parents and the supervision of schools.

6. Non-discrimination and gender equality: Regarding gender equality, in recognition of barriers to girls' participation and success in school, a National Education gender Policy and Strategy was drafted in 2008.

7. Regarding students with special needs, in 2001, the MoE initiated a pilot program, "Special Needs Education within the Concept of Inclusive Education", with the objective:

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---ilo\\_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms\\_126648.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_126648.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> World Data on Education, seventh edition, 2010/11,

[http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Eritrea.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Eritrea.pdf)

- i. to inform policy trends and strategies developed in the field of inclusive education over the decades; and
  - ii. to provide a conceptual background for the proposed strategy for the development and implementation of inclusive education in Eritrea.
8. **Teachers:** In Eritrea, many teachers start their careers as part of their national service, which facilitates enforcement of deployment rules. Teachers are allocated at the national level to one of the country's six regions, then to schools within the region. They have no choice of location. This has resulted in a more even distribution of teachers. Average pupil/teacher ratios range from 30:1 to 53:1, with the most rural regions having the lowest ratios. However, the least experienced teachers are allocated to the most challenging schools.<sup>3</sup>

### **Policy measures:**

9. **Major policy measures<sup>4</sup>:** The revised National Policy on Education of 2003, heir to the transition period Declaration of Policies on Education of 1991, affirms that "education is a fundamental human right and a lifelong process by which all individuals are given opportunities to attain their potential as all rounded citizens." These policy orientations are firmly rooted in the Marco Policy (1994) objectives of the government, which consider the "realization of broad-based education incorporating widespread dissemination of skills and languages and extensive human capital formation" as essential requisites for a modern, technologically advanced and internationally competitive economy and state<sup>5</sup>.

10. In recognition of the legal frameworks, commitments and present national development needs, the Government of Eritrea charted a National Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) for the period 2005-2009. The program provides a tangible way to implement the government's strategies, and provides a framework for the design of specific interventions including their scale, scope and cost. ESDP reaffirms these objectives, and covers the following areas:

- i. Increase equitable access to basic and secondary education;
  - ii. Improve the quality of basic and secondary education;
  - iii. Develop vocational, technical and technological skills; and
  - iv. Strengthen institutional capacity to deliver better quality education services.
11. In recognition of the barriers to girls' participation and success in school, a National Education Gender Policy and Strategy was drafted in 2008.
12. A National Policy on Adult Education was launched in 2005.
13. An Education Sector HIV and AIDS Policy was drafted in 2004.

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<sup>3</sup> EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010, p. 197, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001866/186606E.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The Development of education: national report of the state of Eritrea, submitted for the 48<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education in 2008, [http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National\\_Reports/ICE\\_2008/eritrea\\_NR08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/eritrea_NR08.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The Development of education: national report of the state of Eritrea, submitted for the 48<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education in 2008, [http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National\\_Reports/ICE\\_2008/eritrea\\_NR08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/eritrea_NR08.pdf)

14. The Early Childhood Care and Education Policy and Strategy was launched in 2001.
15. Eritrea's current education strategy neatly summarizes the dilemma facing planners: in 2005, according to the Eritrea Ministry of National Development, "achievement of universal primary education by the global target date of 2015 would be extremely difficult. Even if the financial resources were readily available, it would be physically almost impossible to provide the necessary infrastructure and associated inputs (teachers, administrators, etc.) during the next eleven years to cater for all children of primary school age. ... In view of this, it is projected that the net primary school enrolment ratio would reach 82% by 2015 and that UPE would be achieved by 2019." <sup>6</sup>
16. Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Pursuing its efforts regarding technical and vocational education, the Government of Eritrea charted a national Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) for the period 2005-2009. The program provides a tangible way to implement government's strategies for the development of vocational, technical and technological skills.
17. Education in conflict areas: Conflict in Eritrea is a further cause for concern. After significant progress in increasing enrolment from 1999 to 2006, the country experienced a reversal in 2007. Military tensions appear to be a contributory factor. Since the end of the 1990s, spending on education has been more than halved as a share of GNP, from 5.3% in 1999 to 2.4% in 2006. Meanwhile, military spending has been extremely high, crowding out urgently needed spending on education infrastructure<sup>7</sup>.
18. Curriculum: Major achievements have been registered over the past 19 years as regards the task of revising curriculum. The curriculum ranging from kindergarten up to junior level has been revised and has already been put into effect, while the revised curriculum for the secondary level is being prepared for publishing. In this context, the Government is making progress towards upgrading the teaching-learning process, as well as the quality of education. Moreover, a study is being undertaken to provide education in the mother tongue up to junior level, which is currently confined to elementary level. To this end, the collaboration with partners and concerned parties is necessary.

### **Cooperation:**

19. Eritrea is not party to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education. It did not report on the implementation of the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education within the framework of the:
- a) Sixth Consultation of Member States (covering the period 1994-1999)
  - b) Seventh Consultation of Member States (covering the period 2000-2005)
  - c) Eight Consultation of Member States (covering the period 2006-2011)
20. Eritrea did not report within the framework of the Fourth Consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (covering the period 2005-2008). It has not

<sup>6</sup> EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010, p. 63, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001866/186606E.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010, p. 69, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001866/186606E.pdf>

yet reported within the framework of the Fifth Consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation (2013).

21. Eritrea reported within the framework of the Second Consultation (2011) on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education. However, it did not report for the First Consultation (1993).

22. Eritrea is not party to the 1989 UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education.

### **Freedom of opinion and expression**

23. Constitutional and Legislative Framework: Article 19 of the Eritrean Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief.

24. Defamation remains a criminal offense in Eritrea.

25. Media content is controlled by the Ministry of Information which runs all television outlets, radio stations, and newspapers. Privately owned outlets effectively ceased to exist in the country since a government ban in 2001.

26. The 1996 Press Proclamation Law states that all media should be licensed; publications have to be submitted for government approval before publication. Texts that have been banned cannot be reprinted.

27. Media Self-Regulation: No media self-regulatory mechanisms exist in Eritrea.

28. Safety of Journalists: UNESCO reports three killings of journalists between 2008 and 2012 including journalists Wedi Itay, Mattewos Habteab, and Dawit Habtemichael who died in prison camps in 2012<sup>8</sup>. The Director-General of UNESCO condemned the killing has called on the government to release all such prisoners. The Director-General also called on the country to inform UNESCO, on a voluntary basis, of the actions taken to prevent the impunity of the perpetrators and to notify the Director-General of the status of the judicial inquiries conducted on each of the killings condemned by UNESCO<sup>9</sup>.

### **Right to development and environmental issues**

#### Co-operation

29. Eritrea is located on the east coast of Africa and includes some 300 islands. As such, the country presents many interesting facets to the study of earth sciences, with its diverse topography and island composition. The projects that are currently being implemented in the country within the framework of UNESCO's Natural Sciences Sector are a) Hydrology for the

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<sup>8</sup> UNESCO's Director-General's public statements of killings of journalists ([www.unesco.org/webworld/condemnation](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/condemnation))

<sup>9</sup> Decision on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Adopted by the IPDC Intergovernmental Council at its 27<sup>th</sup> Session (available at [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/ipdc2010\\_safety\\_decision\\_final.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/ipdc2010_safety_decision_final.pdf))

Environment, Life and Policy (HELP) project in the Altbara basin aimed at delivering social, economic and environmental benefits to stakeholders through research towards the sustainable and appropriate use of water, and b) Geodynamics of the East African Rift System / Geophysical Characteristics and Evolution of the South-western Branch of the East African Rift System which addresses the geodynamic evolution, resource potential and hazard impact of the East African Rift System (EARS).

30. The Eritrean Science and Technology Development Agency was established as an autonomous corporate body, along with the National Science and Technology Council and the National Science and Technology Advisory Board. The Council is chaired by the President of Eritrea and is the supreme body responsible for science and technology policy. The objectives of the Agency are the promotion and coordination of science and technology policy under the guidance of the Council and to build up national capacity for research and development in science and technology. The Board, which consists of independent advisors appointed by the Council, makes studies and recommendations to the Agency<sup>10</sup>.

31. UNESCO contributes to the development of Eritrea through implementing projects, in cooperation with the Eritrean National Anti-Doping Organization (ENADO), in the area of anti-doping in sports, such as “Educate, training and enhancing awareness for the elimination of doping in sport” (2011) and “Increasing awareness to kick doping out of Eritrea” (2012-2013) which includes holding of a series of workshops for physical education teachers, developing educational anti-doping materials for high school students, mobilizing media to debate its impact on anti-doping and developing an anti-doping video clip for broadcast on national television (Eri-TV).

### **Cultural rights**

32. Normative Framework: constitutional and legislative frameworks: The State of Eritrea clearly mentions the protection and preservation of all aspects of cultural heritage in the National Charter adopted at the 1994 Conference of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF). Similarly the transitional Penal Code of Eritrea provides articles 646, 803 and 804 to support the protection of all Historical and Archaeological sites. The Eritrean World Heritage Committee has put in place the Heritage Act, which encompasses the tangible and intangible aspects of cultural properties.

33. Institutional framework: The National Museum of Eritrea, which is the custodian of all tangible heritage resources of Eritrea, functions as an autonomous institution. The Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Education focuses on the safeguarding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage. Research and Documentation and Cultural affairs of the Bureau of the Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) also promotes the development of cultural life of the nine ethno-linguistic groups, and the preservation of any written documents in the country. The Eritrean World Heritage Committee (EWHC) is the body in charge of the implementation of UNESCO conventions. It is formed by representatives from different

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<sup>10</sup> <http://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/eri42430E.pdf>.

ministries and works under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. The EWHC has three sub committees, the subcommittee for Tangible Cultural Heritage, the subcommittee for Natural Heritage and subcommittee for Intangible Cultural Heritage.

34. Policy measures: Main objectives of the national culture policy are i) protection and promotion of the cultural heritage, ii) ensuring the proper study and preservation of all Eritrea archaeological heritage including colonial heritage of the Liberation Movement, iii) the study and documentation of all Eritrean languages and traditions. The language policy aimed at promoting the “right to use one’s language” covers all ethno-linguistic groups. The education sector provides curricula for elementary school in nine ethno-linguistic mother tongues and the Ministry of Information broadcasts daily news in more than seven languages (out of nine) and produces newspapers in Tigrigna, Tigre and Arabic.

35. Work with civil society: Civil society includes local communities and non-governmental institutions such as the National Union of Eritrea Youth and Students (NUEYS), the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), the National Confederation of Eritrean Worker. They are considered as the key stakeholders in ensuring the protection of the Eritrean cultural property. The government organizes public awareness campaigns and organizes annual festivals. However, the right to take part in cultural life in Eritrea is challenged by lack of common understanding among different stakeholders, the processes of modernisation and globalization, pressure from economic development projects and lack of public awareness.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Right to education**

36. Eritrea should be encouraged to ratify the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

37. Eritrea should be encouraged to submit state reports for the periodic consultations of UNESCO’s education related standard-setting instruments.

38. Eritrea could be encouraged to pursue its efforts to promote human rights in education.

39. Eritrea is encouraged to intensify its efforts to improve access to education, especially for women, girls and children with special needs.

40. Eritrea could be encouraged to consider implementing an educational campaign aimed at the promotion of gender equity and anti-discriminative practices.

#### **Freedom of opinion and expression**

41. Eritrea should align with international standards on freedom of expression and press freedom which provide for media freedom, pluralism and independence.

42. Eritrea is encouraged to decriminalize defamation and progress towards making it part of the civil code in accordance to international standards.

43. Eritrea must ensure that journalists and media workers are able to practice their profession in a free and safe environment as part of their fundamental human rights.

44. Eritrea is encouraged to establish a freedom of information law in accordance with international standards.

45. UNESCO recommends the development of self-regulatory mechanisms of the media in Eritrea.

### **Right to development and environmental issues**

46. With regard to contribution of science and technology to development, Eritrea is encouraged to report to UNESCO within the framework of the on-going consultations with Member States on the monitoring of the implementation and a possible revision of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers, in particular on the measures undertaken in the country to implement such principles of the Recommendation as the obligation of state authorities to ensure that scientific researchers have the responsibility and the right to work in a spirit of intellectual freedom; to participate in the determination of the aims, content and methods of research, which should be compatible with respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as ecological and social responsibility; to creativity, occupational mobility, international cooperation for furtherance of international peace, cooperation and understanding, etc.

### **Cultural rights**

47. Eritrea is encouraged to upgrade heritage practitioners knowledge and capacity at the national level and with the support of UNESCO.

48. Regarding the implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, Eritrea is encouraged to: i) develop training for site nomination process, ii) implementation of heritage management plan, iii) restoration and conservation of heritage property, and iv) knowledge management (database and GIS documentation).

49. Regarding the right to take part in cultural life in general, Eritrea is encouraged to pay special attention to community and stakeholders awareness-raising.