



PRESS RELEASE

Global Ministerial conference on addressing hate speech through education

26 October 2021

1. Ministers of Education from around the world attended the virtual Global Ministers Conference on Addressing Hate Speech through Education chaired by the President of Namibia, His Excellency Hage Geingob, and UNESCO's Director General, Audrey Azoulay. The conference was called for by the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, at the launch of the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, on 18 June 2019. The conference was co-organized by the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, and UNESCO.
2. The Global Ministerial Conference aimed to present evidence on the scope and harmful effects of hate speech while providing an opportunity for strengthening Member States' commitment to address and counter hate speech through education
3. Member States expressed concern over the alarming rise in hate speech directed at people and specific target groups across the world, menacing human rights and social stability, exacerbating conflict and tensions, contributing to serious human rights violations, including atrocity crimes, and threatening the achievement of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. They also recognized that, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, hateful content, dis/misinformation and conspiracy theories have swept across the globe, aggravating pre-existing biases, harmful stereotypes, intolerance and discrimination. Hence, they stressed that addressing and countering hate speech effectively requires a holistic approach which looks at tackling both its root causes and impact. They also emphasized the importance of ensuring that efforts to tackle hate speech are in line with international human rights standards.
4. Participants also acknowledged the transformative power of education as a fundamental tool to address the root causes and drivers of hate speech, and to promote peaceful, inclusive and just societies for all, in line with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.
5. The Global Ministerial Conference resulted in a summary of the co-chairs recommending that education authorities prioritize:

- **Implementing specific educational interventions aimed at explicitly addressing hate speech at all levels of education, with a lifelong learning perspective.**
 - **Designing and implementing policies that develop digital citizenship skills.**
 - **Providing adequate professional development and training for teachers and school leaders at all levels of education, through an approach that combats discrimination in all its forms and acknowledges and addresses biases and stereotypes.**
 - **Addressing hate speech through cross-curricula interventions and through encouraging pedagogies and approaches that foster diversity and multiple perspectives, as well as developing extra-curricular activities.**
 - **Enhancing multi-sectoral cooperation by building partnerships with all relevant stakeholders through a whole-of-society approach to addressing and countering hate speech through education.**
6. As a way forward, the conference’s co-chairs encouraged the Ministers of Education to take the lead in taking forward and implementing these recommendations at the national and regional level.
7. The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and United Nations Focal Point on Hate Speech, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, reiterated that hate speech can be a driver and trigger of atrocity crimes. She also stressed that “education can counter hatred because it can contribute to inculcate children and youth with the values of respect for diversity, peaceful coexistence, and dialogue - principles that are essential to peaceful and inclusive societies, where each individual is respected without discrimination.” The United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect will work closely with UNESCO, OHCHR and UN Department of Global Communications on the implementation of the conference’s recommendations.

To view the event: <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1q/k1q2h7og2z>

To view the Ministers video statements: <https://en.unesco.org/news/addressing-hate-speech-through-education-global-education-ministers-conference>

For more information on the work of the UN to Address and Counter Hate Speech: <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/hate-speech-strategy.shtml>

For questions from the media, please contact:

Simona Cruciani (cruciani@un.org)