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**IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251
OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED “HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL”**

**Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education,
Vernor Muñoz Villalobos**

Addendum

**PRELIMINARY NOTE ON THE MISSION TO MOROCCO
(27 November-5 December 2006)**

Objectives and plan of the visit

1. The Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Vernor Muñoz Villalobos, visited Morocco from 27 November to 5 December 2006 at the invitation of the Government. The main objective of the Mission was to assess the level of realization of the right to education in Morocco, the policies and measures adopted towards the full realization of the right to education and the obstacles encountered. The Special Rapporteur was particularly interested in assessing the level of realization of the right to education in rural areas. He also wished to look into the enjoyment of the right to education of girls, children with disabilities, children belonging to linguistic minorities, street children and working children.

2. In the course of his visits to Casablanca, Marrakech and Rabat, the Special Rapporteur met with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Religious Endowment and Islamic Affairs, as well as with high-level officials of both Ministries and of the State Secretariat of Childhood, Family and Disabled Persons, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. The Special Rapporteur also met with members of the Ombudsman's office, the Consultative Council on Human Rights and the National Observatory on the Rights of the Child, and with representatives of the regional academies for education and training. He also met with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the field of human rights, women's and children's rights and the rights of persons with disabilities; teachers' trade unions; scholars; and members of the Royal Institute for the Amazigh culture; as well as with United Nations bodies. While in the country the Special Rapporteur visited primary, secondary and high schools in urban and rural areas.

3. The Special Rapporteur wishes to thank the Government of Morocco for its invitation and cooperation during the visit, as well as the assistance provided by the United Nations Development Programme. The Special Rapporteur would also like to thank NGOs and civil society for their cooperation and valuable contribution.

Observations and preliminary conclusions

4. The Special Rapporteur acknowledged the very positive institutional and legislative measures taken by Morocco aimed at the realization of the right to education and, more generally, at the protection of human rights. The Special Rapporteur noted with appreciation the recognition of the right to education in the Constitution and the ratification of and efforts in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. He also noted with appreciation the adoption of the National Charter for Education and Training, which besides setting the framework for the education system in Morocco, introduces human rights education into the curriculum and recognizes human rights among the guiding principles of the education system, together with Islamic values and the concept of citizenship. The Special Rapporteur welcomed the recent establishment of the High Council on Education, a consultative body presided over by His Majesty the King, which foresees the participation of students and teachers among other relevant actors, as well as the establishment of the National Observatory on the Rights of the Child, the Consultative Council on Human Rights and the Ombudsman.

5. The Special Rapporteur commended the authorities for their efforts in combating illiteracy and in ensuring positive progress in the generalization of primary education, which according to official data has evolved from a school enrolment rate of 40 per cent in 1960 to 93 per cent in 2006. The recognition of the Amazigh language and culture in the National Charter, its introduction into the curriculum and progressive implementation in schools, as well as the establishment of the Royal Institute of the Amazigh culture, are particularly relevant in his view.

6. The Special Rapporteur noted with appreciation the recent efforts undertaken by Morocco to introduce a gender perspective into the national budget and the allocation of 27 per cent of its resources (6 per cent of GDP) to the education sector, with 80 per cent of the education budget devoted to salaries of teachers and the rest distributed in accordance with regional needs, with particular attention paid to the rural and more impoverished areas.

7. The Special Rapporteur also welcomed the decentralization process in the field of education, whereby the Ministry of Education has granted administrative and financial autonomy to the regional academies of teaching and training and their provincial delegations. Equally important, the regional academies have the autonomy to design 20 per cent of their school curriculum, adapting it to local cultural specificities and needs.

8. Despite a wide range of positive steps in the realization of the right to education, the Special Rapporteur considered the implementation of public policies and strategies, particularly regarding the generalization and quality of education, as one of the major challenges for an effective and full realization of the right to education in the country. The Special Rapporteur noted that children in rural areas, particularly girls, working and street children, as well as children with disabilities, were often deprived of their fundamental right to education.

9. The Special Rapporteur acknowledged the increase in primary school enrolment and noted that further efforts are still needed to guarantee the enrolment of the remaining 7-8 per cent of children outside the education system (around 1.5 million). According to the Millennium Development Goals Morocco Country Report (2005), 40 per cent of the children enrolled in primary school drop out before finalizing the five years envisaged (6-11 years old) and up to 50 per cent of children in urban areas and 80 per cent in rural areas abandon secondary school during the intended three-year cycle (12-14 years old). In this regard, the Special Rapporteur highlights the importance of increasing retention and completion rates of boys and girls alike in the primary school cycle. The Special Rapporteur believes that the lack of infrastructure in secondary and high schools, the lack of canteens and boarding facilities, coupled with a prevailing lack of sanitation, water and electricity supply in various rural areas, have a direct negative impact on the realization of the right to education, especially of girls. In his view, greater budgetary efforts are needed to address the lack of infrastructure in rural areas, particularly in those that have been excluded from investment and assistance in the past, such as Khenifra in the Atlas Mountains and the Rif region.

10. The Special Rapporteur also identified the rising phenomenon of child labour as an important factor impeding children's enjoyment of their right to education. Poverty and the difficult socio-economic conditions of Moroccan families, some traditional and cultural practices, as well as the failure to implement current legislation prohibiting the employment of children below 15 years old, hamper children's enrolment and continuation at school. While

girls mainly work as domestic workers, inside and outside the home, often under abusive working conditions, boys work in the manufacturing sector producing traditional handicrafts and in the carpet-weaving industry. In addition, estimates indicate the existence of 600,000 street children, the great majority of whom are not attending school. The State's response to this phenomenon has not so far led to the realization of the right to education of these children.

11. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur urged the authorities to elaborate and implement appropriate legislation on the prohibition of child labour; to consider establishing the age for completion of school education as the minimum age for admission to any form of employment; and to adopt appropriate socio-economic policies and measures to tackle the root causes of these phenomena. The authorities should further strengthen their efforts to ensure the enrolment and continuation throughout the education cycle of working and street children. To this end, he recommended as an initial measure of crucial importance, the establishment of a data and information collection system on street and working children, especially girls who are domestic workers.

12. The Special Rapporteur identified some shortcomings in the realization of the right to education of children with disabilities, particularly in terms of their inclusion in school. The Special Rapporteur strongly recommended that Morocco ratify the recently adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which will guide the development of national policies in the field of disability, particularly regarding the right to education of children with disabilities. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur stressed the importance of allocating sufficient funding, to allow for the implementation of existing national policies and strategies, such as the National Plan 2006-2007 towards children with disabilities, and any future policies, as well as to adapt school infrastructures and materials to their needs. The Special Rapporteur strongly emphasized the importance of providing adequate training for teachers, including disability awareness, means of communication, educational techniques and materials to support children with disabilities, so as to ensure their inclusion in school.

13. The Special Rapporteur, also noted with concern delays in the implementation of the teaching of Amazigh, as envisaged in the National Charter for Education and Training. He identified the need for systematic and adequate training of teachers to enable the teaching of Amazigh and recommended additional funding to ensure the progressive implementation of the National Charter.

14. The Special Rapporteur considered the illiteracy rate to be a challenge for the country, despite national literacy programmes and measures so far undertaken, the content of which, in his view, needs improving.

15. The Special Rapporteur welcomed the introduction of human rights into the curriculum and textbooks, noting the need to further and systematically train teachers in human rights. He also welcomed the 2002 revision of school manuals and, echoing observations made by civil society, noted that further efforts were needed to erase gender stereotypes from school manuals and to include a gender and human rights perspective in the education system. The Special Rapporteur noted with concern that the teaching of human rights was often delegated to local associations, with no supervision as to the content and quality of their teaching. Under the subject "education on citizenship" an amalgam of concepts, not always in line with international human rights law, was taught and referred to as human rights. Disparities in the content and

quality of the teaching of human rights were strongly denounced by civil society. Moreover, the Special Rapporteur highlighted the importance of ensuring that human rights are not only taught as a subject, but are also integrated into the education process as part of school life. In that context, he called on the authorities to continue their actions against corporal punishment in schools, which is already prohibited.

16. The Special Rapporteur recommends the authorities go beyond the current parity scheme, mainly focusing on ensuring equal access of girls and boys to school, to include a gender perspective and the promotion of the principle of equal rights for men and women throughout the education system. The Special Rapporteur noted the strategy of the Ministry of Education to involve civil society through the establishment of partnerships with local associations and NGOs in the education sector, and an apparently excessive promotion by the authorities of private education. The Special Rapporteur stressed that the State, and not local associations, nor the private sector, is responsible for guaranteeing the realization of the right to education.

17. The Special Rapporteur will submit his final report and recommendations on his visit to Morocco to a future session of the Human Rights Council.
