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AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS BODY CAUTIONS OVER PRIVATISATION IN EDUCATION IN UGANDA

In a series of [recommendations](#) published last week, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission) expressed its deep concerns about the growth and lack of regulation of private schools in Uganda, which could be in violation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' rights. The African Commission expressed its worry that **“that the increase in the establishment of private schools [...] could result in discrimination against children from low-income households”**. It further noted that the growth of private education “has been encouraged by the Government”, which **“raises the concern of the government gradually releasing itself from the obligation to provide quality public education”**.

Accordingly, the African Commission recommended that the Government of Uganda **“increase its investment in public education to match the increasing enrolment, and ensure the quality thereof, to avoid forcing parents to resort to private schools”**. It also requested that the government **“regulate the quality of education being provided by private schools”** in Uganda.

The recommendations from the African Commission have come shortly after another human rights body, the UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, made similar [recommendations](#) to Uganda.

In a [press release](#) published on 26 February by the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER), a Ugandan human rights NGO, Ms Nakulima Saphina, - a Senior Program Officer at ISER who led a [research](#) on the impact of privatisation in education on the right to education in Uganda - reacted: *“the Commission was spot on in its recommendations. The research clearly indicated that the increased growth of private schools in the country was a threat to children from low- income households, and for the development and social cohesion in the country.”*

The Africa Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA), the Equal Education Law Centre, the Global Campaign for Education, the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, IBIS Denmark, the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), the Program on Human Rights in the Global Economy, Public Services International, and the Right to Education Project, have been [working closely](#) with ISER and other partners in Uganda and other countries to address and offer concrete solutions to the challenges raised by the rapid growth of private actors in education. These organisations have published a number of [reports](#) analysing privatisation of education in various countries in the last two years. Whereas the UN and the African Commission have made several warnings and expressed strong concerns about the detrimental impact of the growth of private actors in education on the

realisation of human rights, private schools, and in particular large-scale of -cost commercial private schools companies, continue to expand rapidly without any assessment, and with the support of donors States and institutions, including the World Bank.

These organisations join ISER in urging the government of Uganda to take concrete and targeted steps to address the concerns raised in the concluding observations on the State report of Uganda made by the African Commission and the UN Committee. They also urge all other States and international donors to comply with their human rights obligations, in the light of the many statements of the African Commission and UN bodies.

END

Documents

- ISER press release: <http://bit.ly/1Qn5iR7>
- ISER research report on Impact of Privatisation in Education
http://www.iser-uganda.org/images/downloads/privatisation_discrimination_and_right_to_education.pdf
- Concluding observations from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
<http://iser-uganda.org/images/downloads/concluding-observations-on-the-5th-periodic-state-report-of-uganda-2010-2012.pdf>
- Concluding observations from the UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
http://iser-uganda.org/images/downloads/INT_CESCR_COC_UGA_20934_E.pdf
- Research conducted in other countries: <http://bit.ly/privatisationproject>

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Notes

- At its 57th ordinary session held from 4th-18th November 2015, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights reviewed Uganda's human rights records and adopted several made recommendations to Uganda. These recommendations followed consideration of the 5th Periodic State Report of the Republic of Uganda (2010-2012) on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights during the Commissions 56th Ordinary session.