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The Ten Overarching Principles

The Abidjan Principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education are made up of 97 Guiding Principles. In addition to these, 10 overarching Principles provide an overview and summary of the Guiding Principles. The 10 Principles should be read in conjunction with the Guiding Principles, and were adopted as a whole with the full Abidjan Principles.

Principle 1. States must respect, protect, and fulfil the right to education of everyone within their jurisdiction in accordance with the rights to equality and non-discrimination.

Principle 2. States must provide free, public education of the highest attainable quality to everyone within their jurisdiction as effectively and expeditiously as possible, to the maximum of their available resources.

Principle 3. States must respect the liberty of parents or legal guardians to choose for their children an educational institution other than a public educational institution, and the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct private educational institutions, subject always to the requirement that such private educational institutions conform to standards established by the State in accordance with its obligations under international human rights law.

Principle 4. States must take all effective measures, including particularly the adoption and enforcement of effective regulatory measures, to ensure the realisation of the right to education where private actors are involved in the provision of education.

Principle 5. States must prioritise the funding and provision of free, quality, public education, and may only fund eligible private instructional educational institutions, whether directly or indirectly, including through tax deductions, of land concessions, international assistance and cooperation, or other forms of indirect support, if they comply with applicable human rights law and standards and strictly observe all substantive, procedural, and operational requirements.

Principle 6. International assistance and cooperation, where provided, must reinforce the building of free, quality, public education systems, and refrain from supporting, directly or indirectly, private educational institutions in a manner that is inconsistent with human rights.

Principle 7. States must put in place adequate mechanisms to ensure they are accountable for their obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil the right to education, including their obligations in the context of the involvement of private actors in education.

Principle 8. States must regularly monitor compliance of public and private institutions with the right to education and ensure all public policies and practices related to this right comply with human rights principles.

Principle 9. States must ensure access to an effective remedy for violations of the right to education and for any human rights abuses by a private actor involved in education.

Principle 10. States should guarantee the effective implementation of these Guiding Principles by all appropriate means, including where necessary by adopting and enforcing the required legal and budgetary reforms.