The final text of the *Abidjan Principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education* will be published on Thursday 21st March 2019, at The Heron Portico Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya, from 7:30 am to 9:30 am GMT+3. The text is available to the media under strict embargo until 21 March 6 am GMT at www.abidjanprinciples.org/media.

The Abidjan Principles is a new landmark reference point in terms of understanding the right to education. Providing crucial guidance to governments, education providers, human rights practitioners, scholars and other stakeholders, the Principles are intended to directly inform education policies. They identify and unpack the existing obligations of states under international human rights law to provide quality public education and to regulate private involvement in education.

The Abidjan Principles constitute a milestone to address the raging debates about public and private education, following the significant increase in private schools that has taken place in the last two decades. By providing a rigorous legal framework detailing States’ existing legal binding obligations, they will help to ensure that the discussion on education policies put the right to education as their core.

The Abidjan Principles are being released following their adoption by human rights experts in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. On 13 February 2019, following three years of consultations, documentation and drafting, human rights experts from around the world came together to discuss and finalise the text of the Abidjan Principles, in the presence of the Minister of Education of Côte d’Ivoire, Ms Kandia Camara.

The Abidjan Principles will be made available to the public on 21 March 2019 during the release event and available on www.abidjanprinciples.org/en/principles. They will be released in their two adoption languages, English and French. They will later be accompanied by commentary and key resources and translated into other languages.

The drafting of the Abidjan Principles was led by a drafting committee made up of nine internationally-renowned experts. Another 15 experts who were present in Abidjan are signatories to the text, and dozens more leading human rights experts who participated to its elaboration are expected to sign the text in the coming weeks.

A secretariat made up of Amnesty International, the Equal Education Law Centre, the Global Initiative for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights, and the Right to Education Initiative facilitated the consultative process.

After their publication, the Abidjan Principles will also be open for endorsements from civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

A series of launch events and presentations on the Abidjan Principles are scheduled throughout 2019. The next events will include a panel at the World Bank Spring Meetings.
on 11 April in Washington, D.C., USA, as well as presentations at the **Comparative and International Education Society conference** on 16 April in San Francisco, USA.

More international events will be announced. For more information and to be notified, please sign up to the Abidjan Principles mailing list: [http://eepurl.com/geUlLb](http://eepurl.com/geUlLb).

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**Quotes from the Drafting Committee**

**Professor Ann Skelton**, from South Africa, who chaired the Drafting Committee, and is a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UNESCO Chair of Education Law in Africa, said: ‘It is with great excitement that we are releasing the final text of the Abidjan Principles today. This is a fundamental text, because for the first time it provides a rigorous and comprehensive legal framework to address one of the most crucial current issues in education policies: the role of the State and private actors.’

**Jayna Kothari**, a Counsel in the Karnataka High Court and the Supreme Court of India, said: 'Some of the critical work is only just beginning as we take the Abidjan Principles from paper to practice. We will work for their implementation, whether through technical support or litigation. This is particularly relevant in the Asia-Pacific region, where the unchecked growth of private schools is creating harmful discrimination and social division.'

**Dr Magdalena Sepúlveda**, a former UN Special Rapporteur from Chile, said: 'Fair education systems are the key to sustainable development, and the Abidjan Principles give us a path to achieve that. We hope that the Principles will form the basis of education policy for States and will provide human rights practitioners with the tools they need to advocate for the provision of quality public education.'

**Professor Aoife Nolan**, a member of the Council of Europe’s European Committee of Social Rights from Ireland, said: ‘In these times of austerity and budget cuts, increasing privatisation of education is a tempting option for governments, but they need to understand they have obligations to meet. It is essential to have a clear human rights framework that guarantees the protection of human dignity at all times.’

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**Media Contacts:**

For press releases in other languages, images, and videos, see: [www.abidjanprinciples.org/media](http://www.abidjanprinciples.org/media)

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