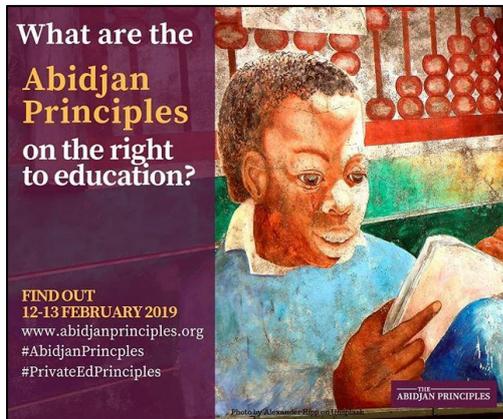




## Landmark Abidjan Principles on the right to education adopted by pool of eminent experts

12-13 February 2019, Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire



**The Abidjan Principles seek to strengthen efforts to ensure that the right to education is protected from private actor involvement in education.**

On 13 February 2019, following three years of consultations, documentation, and drafting, human rights experts from around the world came together in Abidjan to discuss, finalise, and adopt the Guiding Principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education.

The document, now known as the [Abidjan Principles](http://www.abidjanprinciples.org), identifies and unpacks the existing obligations of states under international human rights law to provide quality public education and to regulate private actors in education in the context of the rapid privatisation and commercialisation of education globally and in the Asia Pacific region. The landmark document, intended to directly inform education policies, was signed in the

presence of the Minister of Education of Côte d'Ivoire, Kandia Camara, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Boly Barry Koumba.

The drafting of the Abidjan Principles was led by a committee made up of nine internationally-renowned experts chaired by Professor Ann Skelton from South Africa, a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UNESCO Chair of Education Law in Africa. Another 15 eminent human rights and legal experts participated in the adoption conference, including experts from the India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Australia. 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.

Dozens of education and human rights advocates and campaigners observed the adoption of the Abidjan Principles and met shortly after to discuss the dissemination of the document. Among them were representatives of regional and national education networks from around the world affiliated with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). ASPBAE was represented by Rene Raya, Lead Policy Analyst; Ram Gaire, Programme Manager of the National Campaign for Education-Nepal (NCE Nepal) and GCE Board Member; and Addie Unsi, National Coordinator of E-Net Philippines.



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



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**ASPBAE and member national education coalitions have been campaigning against the rising privatisation and commercialisation of education across the region and calling for strong and well-funded public education systems.**

Professor Ann Skelton, who chaired the adoption conference, noted that for the first time, a document “*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, “This (the Abidjan Principles) is particularly relevant in the Asia Pacific region, where the unchecked growth of private schools is creating harmful discrimination and social division.”

ASPBAE, along with member national education coalitions in the Asia Pacific, have been campaigning against the rising privatisation and commercialisation of education

across the region and calling for strong and well-funded public education systems.

In previous years, parallel reports were submitted to the UN Human Rights Council and UN Human Rights treaty bodies which warned against the rise of unregulated private educational institutions and the risk of segregation in education.

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