



**UN APPG**

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Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
Castle View House  
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cc. Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 2AA

21 August 2013

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations (UN APPG) to convey my concerns regarding the proposed programmes of study for Citizenship under the National Curriculum from 2014.

The UN APPG is a cross-party group supporting and publicising the work, aims and ideals of the United Nations. As such, I was delighted by the decision to retain Citizenship as a foundation subject for Key Stages 3 and 4. When taught well, the subject enables pupils to understand what it means to be an active and responsible member of their local, national and international communities. It also gives them the chance to learn about global problems and solutions from a multidisciplinary perspective, and to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to make a useful contribution to our increasingly interdependent world.

We are concerned, however, that references to the UN, which are included in the existing programmes of study for KS3 and KS4, have been omitted from the revised draft. Learning about the UN is an associated part of understanding the UK's relations with the rest of the world. It is a key component of the country's international influence and it remains an effective tool for the UK in addressing global challenges and achieving foreign policy goals, as expressed in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

The UK is party to numerous UN treaties and activities that have an impact on the country, from peacebuilding and peacekeeping to combating terrorism, from environmental protection to pandemic preparedness. UN human rights treaties, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, contribute to the protection and promotion of fundamental freedoms enjoyed by British citizens.

The UN is also an important institution for pupils to understand in the context of the major challenges their generation will face, such as food security, environmental degradation and migration. These are not challenges that countries can address individually – concerted global action is needed and the UN will continue to be central to these efforts.

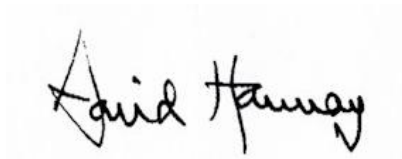
The existing programmes of study for Citizenship include the role of the UN “in the context of topical events such as conflict situations affecting the international community”. For many pupils, this may be the only opportunity to study and debate current affairs and the role of the international community.

UNA-UK therefore strongly believes that the programmes of study should retain explicit references to the UN. Whilst we feel that pupils at both KS3 and KS4 would benefit from learning about the organisation, we think that a reference to the UN would sit particularly well in the fourth bullet point under KS4: “local, regional and international governance and the United Kingdom's relations with the rest of Europe, the Commonwealth, **[the United Nations,]** and the wider world.”

Many voluntary organisations have produced teaching resources on issues such as the UN and human rights that are currently being used by schools across the country. Several offer teacher training and have built strong relationships with schools. UNA-UK, for instance, has an outreach programme for 13-18-year-olds called *Generation United Nations*, which supports teaching and learning about the UN under the Citizenship curriculum and through Model UN and other activities. However, such initiatives can only reach a limited number of schools.

We hope that the final version of the revised programme of study will make explicit reference to the UN so that all pupils following the National Curriculum have the opportunity to learn about this important organisation and the role it plays in our national life.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hannay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Lord Hannay  
Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations