

Press Statement

Education Must be Protected from the Forces of Privatisation

New Delhi, 15th January, RTE Forum. Right to Education Forum, Council for Social Development and UNESCO, Delhi jointly organized a **Public Lecture on Right to Education** today at IIC Annexe by Mr. Kishore Singh, UN Special Rapporteur on RTE. The Lecture was followed by Panel Discussion by other eminent personalities working in the field of education and other social issues. Prof. Muchkund Dubey, educationist, former Foreign Secretary and acting President, Council for Social Development chaired the programme. Prof. Geetha B. Nambissan, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Mr. Alisher Umarov, Chief of Education and Programme Specialist, UNESCO, Delhi; and Dr. M. P. Raju, Advocate, Supreme Court; were other Panelists in the discussion which was followed by question-answer session.

Mr. Kishore Singh who has submitted a report recently to the United Nation General Assembly based on the facts and observations from different countries, strongly advocated the need of strengthening the mechanism of Public Education System for the implementation of Right to Education as well as for universalization of good quality education for all children world-wide. Warning against the increasing privatization and commercialization of school education, he argued that it has been proved detrimental to the concept of fundamental right to education for the millions of children all over the world. He said that education is not a privilege of the rich and is inalienable for every child. The exponential growth of private education is replacing public education rapidly rather than supplementing it. The costs associated with private schools are exacerbating inequalities affecting the social fabric as poor and marginalized groups are automatically excluded from going to them. Mr. Singh argued that State is both guarantor and regulator of education as a fundamental human right and a noble cause, so it must fulfill its obligation providing basic education free of costs on the one hand and regulate private education on the other. He also said that Government is duty-bound to strengthen their public education systems rather than allowing or supporting private providers which are driven by profit making motives. He addressed many of the concerns that have emerged in terms of State obligations for the provision of the right to education as well as respect for the principles of social justice and equity, core principles of the UN system.

He put forth his ideas firmly against rapid and unregulated growth of privatization in education which has become a general phenomenon in present developmental model adopted by the most of developing countries keeping the marginalized, disadvantaged and poor section of the society away from quality education. The situation is worse in Indian context also where even after nearly 5 years of the enactment of the *Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009* as *fundamental right*; we are far from achieving the goals of Universalization of equitable quality education.