**Program of Work**

**THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER**

**10:00-10:30 Item 1: Opening Meeting**

1. Statement by the President of the Human Rights Council H.E Mr Coly Seck
2. Statement by the High Commissioner for Human Rights H.E. Ms Michelle Bachelet
3. Statement by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities H.E. Mr Lamberto Zannier
4. Statement by the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Dr Fernand de Varennes
5. Remarks by the Chair of the Forum Ms Anastasia Crickley
6. Remarks by the Chair of the Forum Ms Astrid Thors

**10:30-13:00 Item 2: Human rights and minority language education**

Education in, and the teaching of, minority languages is an essential issue for many minorities around the world. Although a number of international and regional human rights instruments address the issue, gaps remain in identifying the relationship between human rights obligations and the use of minority languages in education. Participants will discuss the rights enshrined in international and regional human rights instruments providing for education in, and the teaching of, minority languages.

The loss of linguistic diversity is a loss for humanity’s heritage. Respectfully accommodating linguistic diversity is a hallmark of an inclusive society, and one of the keys to countering intolerance and racism. Inclusive education is also intimately connected to human rights obligations in that it involves equal learning opportunities for all, including speakers of minority languages, without any discrimination. The participants will explore the benefits of education in minority languages and the benefits of acquiring fluency in official and other languages. They will draw comparisons and discuss these issues through a human rights-based approach, including in the context of ensuring the right to education for all. This is particularly important for the education of minority children, who often face significant challenges in accessing quality education and who often drop out of school because education is not provided in their own language.

Discussions will highlight the positive, empowering effect of education in, and the teaching of, minority languages, in particular with regard to the effective participation in public life by persons belonging to minorities. Participants will address the specific needs and preferences of minorities with regard to pedagogical approaches, and methods for teaching in, and the teaching of, minority languages.

The panel discussion is moderated by **Mr Vincent Defourny,** Director of UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva

* **Ms Tove Skutnabb-Kangas,** Emerita, Associate Professor at Åbo Akademi University, Finland.
* **Mr Aleksandr Kuzmin,** Board Member of Latvian human Rights Committee
* **Ms** **Victoria Manning,** Board Member of World Federation of the Deaf

**Interactive Dialogue**

**13:00-15:00 Lunch break and side events in rooms XXI, XXII, XXV**

**15:00-18:00 Item 3: Public policy objectives for education in, and the teaching of, minority languages**

Participants will consider how public policies should facilitate the effective implementation of the human rights of persons belonging to minorities in the use of their languages in education. They will discuss the need for promoting such education with the purpose of preserving and promoting minority languages and identities. Participants will also consider ways to effectively implement Sustainable Development Goal 4, aimed at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. They will consider minority language education and its relationship to social development and cohesion, and the strengthening of inclusive and tolerant societies.

Discussions will highlight the importance of recognizing and promoting the educational needs of minorities as a crucial component for the promotion of society’s diversity, and thus as an important factor in reducing inter-ethnic tensions and preventing conflicts.

In addition to legislative, institutional and policy measures, it is essential that appropriate resources and effective approaches are put in place for education in, and the teaching of, minority languages. Participants will discuss the efficient and non-discriminatory use and management of resources, including by members of minority communities themselves, as an important component for advancement of the above-mentioned rights of persons belonging to minorities. They will discuss the importance of international and regional cooperation and assistance for the advancement of this goal.

The panel discussion is moderated by **Ms Anna-Mária Bíró,** Director of Tom Lantos Institute

* **Ms Shivani Nag,** Assistant Professor in School of Education Studies, Ambedkar University
* **Ms Kathleen Heugh**, Associate Professor at University of South Australia
* **Mr Juan de Dios Simón,** Program Manager of Educo Foundation in Guatemala

**Interactive Dialogue**

**FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER**

**10:00-13:00 Item 4: Effective practices for education in, and the teaching of, minority languages**

Beyond purely human rights or public policy considerations, it is essential to keep in mind the pedagogical value and significance of teaching in minority languages, and the impact it may have on learning outcomes for minority children, as well as on their interaction with other members of society. Participants will make reference to inclusive pedagogical approaches and teaching methods, including methods for teaching in, and for the teaching of, minority languages. Participants will also discuss the various types of educational institutions accommodating education in, and the teaching of, minority languages.

Participants will share experiences relating to the opportunities available to linguistic minorities to learn and receive education in their languages. They will discuss effective practices relating to the inclusion of minority languages in national curricula, such that individuals belonging to other linguistic communities have the opportunity to be exposed to minority languages. The effective involvement of minorities in the design and implementation of educational programmes, as well as practices relating to intercultural exchanges and activities carried out among different language groups inside and outside educational settings, will be discussed.

Participants will be invited to reflect on the relationship between education in, and the teaching of, a minority language and the learning of a majority, State or official language.

# The panel discussion is moderated by Mr Benyam Mezmur, Member of the Committee of the Rights of the Child

# Mr Tamás Kiss, Researcher at the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities

# Ms Linda Tsung, Associate Dean and Associate Professor, University of Sydney

# Mr Salih Akin, Assistant Professor at Rouen University in France

**Interactive Dialogue**

**13:00-15:00 Lunch break and side events in rooms XXI, XXII, XXV**

**15:00-17:45 Item 5: Language, education and the empowerment of minority women and girls**

Participants will discuss the impact of minority language education on access to education and opportunities for minority women and girls, who often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion and language. Minority women and girls are disproportionately affected by barriers to access to education and high school dropout rates.

Barriers to education represent barriers to progress and empowerment. Education in, and the teaching of, their languages often assist in ensuring better access to education and learning opportunities for minority women and girls. Language is also an important tool for ensuring the realization of basic human rights and the accessibility of services, including health-care and social services, which in some cases can be particularly vital for women and girls. Participants will highlight these matters and discuss ways to more effectively address related challenges.

Participants will also discuss the importance of the inclusion and effective participation of minority women and girls in the design of policies and strategies relating to education in, and the teaching of, their languages, and will share good practices in this regard.

# **The panel discussion is moderated by**Ms Aliona Grossu, Member of the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

* **Ms Nouha Grine,** President of Tamount Association for Amazigh Rights
* **Ms Elżbieta Kuzborska-Pacha,** Legal Adviser to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
* **Ms Puja Kapai Paryani,** Associate Professor and Convenor of the Women’s Studies Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong

**Interactive Dialogue**

**17:45-18:00 Item 6: Concluding remarks**

Concluding remarks by **Mr. Fernand de Varennes**, Special Rapporteur on minority issues

Concluding remarks by **Ms Anastasia Crickey,** Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues

Concluding remarks by **Ms Astrid Thors,** Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues

***Session closes***