



CONTENTS

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	1
EMRIP 4 th session	1
Launch of UNIPP	1
OHCHR at the Permanent Forum	2
Expert Workshop on the latest EMRIP study	2
Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	3
News on the UN Voluntary Funds	3
MINORITIES	3
Expert Consultation and UNCT training workshop in Bangkok	3
Advancing Minority Rights in Central Asia	4
Independent Expert on Minority Issues	4
COMMON ISSUES	3
COMMON ACTIVITIES: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MINORITIES	5
Fellowship Programmes	5
GENERAL UPDATES:	6
Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, UPR, and other developments	
FORTHCOMING EVENTS	9

I. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

4TH SESSION OF THE EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HELD IN GENEVA

The Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section (IPMS) organized the 4th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Expert Mechanism), which was held between 11 and 15 July. The new composition of the Expert Mechanism consists of Vital Bamanze, Anastasia Chukhman, Jannie Lasimbang, Jose Carlos Morales Morales and Wilton Littlechild.

The session was opened by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and was followed by opening remarks from the President of the Human Rights Council. The Expert Mechanism held discussions on the follow-up to its first study on education and the finalisation of its current study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making. The Expert Mechanism also discussed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and its proposals for the Human Rights Council. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and a representative of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues participated actively. The Expert Mechanism proposed to the Human Rights Council that it continue its study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making into the future, with a specific focus on extractive industries. The Human Rights Council will consider the proposal in its September session. *More information on the 4th session:* <http://goo.gl/tHDSK>

UNITED NATIONS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' PARTNERSHIP (UNIPP)

The United Nations has launched a new initiative to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples, aiming to strengthen their institutions and ability to fully participate in governance and policy processes at the local and national levels. The initiative named the UN Indigenous Peoples' Partnership was launched on 20 May 2011 during the 10th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York. It will function through a Multi-Donor Trust Fund with the primary aim of supporting joint UN programmes at the country level, in partnership with indigenous peoples.

UNIPP Policy Board held its inaugural session 19-20 July 2011 in Geneva, when the Policy Board adopted governance and operational documents, along with strategic priorities. The Policy Board identified focus countries and key thematic priorities: legislative review and reform; access to justice and strengthening of indigenous customary law and justice systems; access to land and ancestral territories; the impact of extractive industries on indigenous peoples; the right to education and health, and the rights of indigenous women, children and youth.

The UNIPP is a collaborative framework established by the ILO, OHCHR, UNICEF and UNDP. UNFPA signed on to the partnership after its launch.

More at: www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/index.htm

TOWARD AN OPERATIONAL GUIDE FOR NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

Promoting respect for and full application of the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples requires close cooperation with indigenous peoples, States and NGOs. For these efforts to be truly effective at the country level, it is imperative to engage with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) who can play an instrumental role in advancing the implementation of the Declaration at the country level.

It is against this background that OHCHR has markedly stepped up its engagement with NHRIs, starting with a global consultation meeting in Bangkok in 2009, followed by a sub-regional meeting last year in New Zealand/Aotearoa, co-organized with the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, and more recently a consultation "Toward an Operational Guide for National Human Rights Institutions: Possible good practices in addressing the rights of Indigenous Peoples" held in Geneva on 11 July 2011.

At the meeting, representatives of NHRIs from Namibia, South Africa, Kenya, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Philippines, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, Peru, El Salvador and Panama shared examples of good practices in advancing the rights of indigenous peoples and discussed the possible content of the operational guide and ways forward in terms of the process.

More at: www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/seminar.htm

OHCHR ACTIVITIES AT THE PERMANENT FORUM

OHCHR participated in the 10th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which took place from 16 to 27 May 2011 in New York. In addition to written contributions, representatives of IPMS and the Regional Office for Central America delivered statements under agenda item 4(a) - Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other items. In the margins of the Permanent Forum session, IPMS also co-organised a meeting for parliamentarians in order to discuss the concept and outline of a Handbook for parliamentarians on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The concept of the publication was presented and feedback sought. The Report on the 10th session also submits some recommendations to OHCHR.

Statement made by the IPMS: <http://goo.gl/zjmI3>

Report of the UNPFII: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/session_10_report_EN.pdf

Link to the statements made at the UNPFII: <http://www.docip.org/News.78+M58ba778ec41.0.html>

EXPERT WORKSHOP ON THE EMRIP'S STUDY ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING

IPMS hosted an expert workshop on the Expert Mechanism's study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making in March 2011.

The experts, from around the globe and consisting of indigenous individuals, members of the Expert Mechanism, academics and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, focused on identifying examples of good practices in relation to indigenous peoples' participation in decision making. The discussion centred on issues such as the difficulties associated with identifying good practices generally, indigenous peoples' parliaments, indigenous participation in mainstream electoral politics as well as indigenous peoples' own governance structures. The expert workshop contributed significantly to the Expert Mechanism's final report on its study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making.

More information on EMRIP: www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Pages/EMRIPIndex.aspx

Advance version of the study: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/AEVfinalreportStudyIPRightParticipate.pdf

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE IPMS ON ADVANCING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Side event on "Advancing Dialogue on Treaties, Agreements and other Constructive Arrangements between States and Indigenous Peoples within the UN system"

The event, organized in the margins of the 4th session of EMRIP by the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) in cooperation with OHCHR, discussed the relevance of treaties, agreements and constructive arrangements; drawing on the outcome of the two seminars organized by OHCHR in 2003 and 2006; the importance of recognizing and ensuring implementation of treaties and agreements in light of the relevant provisions of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and the possible next steps. There are proposals to organise a third seminar on the topic in 2012, but no decision has been yet taken by OHCHR.

ICC 24 General Meeting

A member of the IPMS spoke at the 24th meeting of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) in Geneva on 18 May 2011 stressing that the implementation of the Declaration remains a challenge that requires decisive and concerted efforts at all levels. Amongst the key actors in this respect are national human rights institutions (NHRIs), whose efforts to promote and protect human rights need to encompass the rights of indigenous peoples contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. She noted that the crucial role of NHRIs was highlighted by various international bodies and mechanisms such as the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at its third session and the Human Rights Council which, in its annual resolution on indigenous peoples, encouraged national human rights institutions to strengthen their capacities to advance indigenous issues, including with the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

More at: <http://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/ICC/AnnualMeeting/24/5Indigenous%20Peoples%20Rights/Forms/Default%20View.aspx>

Launch of the publication Indigenous World

A member of the IPMS spoke at the launch of the International Work Group of Indigenous Affairs' annual publication entitled Indigenous World in Copenhagen, Denmark in early June 2011, drawing attention to the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' draft Advice No 2 on indigenous peoples' participation in decision making, a central theme in Indigenous World. She highlighted that the Expert Mechanism's approach is to require that the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples is necessary "in matters of fundamental importance for their rights, survival, dignity and well-being."

Workshop on indigenous rights and truth commissions

A member of the IPMS also contributed to the International Center for Transitional Justice workshop on "Strengthening Indigenous Rights through Truth Commissions" in New York in July 2010, highlighting the ways in which the international human rights institutional structure, including OHCHR, treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council can be used to facilitate support for truth commissions engaging issues facing indigenous peoples.

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (SR)

Reports: The SR published online an advanced unedited version of the observations on the situation of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala in relation to extractive and other types of industries affecting traditional indigenous territories - with an appendix on the Marlin mine case (in Spanish).

The SR published online an advanced unedited version of his report on the situation of the Māori People in New Zealand, examining their situation on the basis of information received during the visit to the country from 18 to 23 July 2010 and independent research.

County visits: The SR visited New Caledonia from 4 to 13 February 2011. The objective of the visit was to hold consultations and receive information in order to examine the human rights situation of the indigenous people of the country – the Kanak people – while recognizing fully the history of New Caledonia.

Press releases and statements

The SR urged the Peruvian Government and indigenous chiefs of the department of Puno to resolve conflicts related to mining activities. (6 July 2011)

The SR published online a document (in Spanish) on the situation of indigenous peoples affected by the El Diquís hydroelectric project in Costa Rica. (30 May 2011)

The SR made a statement to the 10th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In the statement he addressed coordination with the Permanent Forum, presented activities undertaken within the scope of his mandate, and made observations on the work of the Permanent Forum. (19 May 2011)

The SR called for further contact between the authorities and the indigenous and tribal peoples of Surinam, and reiterated his readiness to assist with efforts to advance their land and resource rights. (17 March 2011)

The SR issued a press release on the growing social unrest in Panama during the reform process of the Mineral Resources Code. (15 February 2011)

More information: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/rapporteur>.

II. MINORITIES

EXPERT CONSULTATION ON POLICING AND A UNCT TRAINING WORKSHOP IN BANGKOK

IPMS organized an Expert Consultation on Effective Practices in Policing and Minority Communities in Asia and the Pacific. The Expert consultation took place on 30 and 31 May 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand. The objective of the consultation was to share and collect effective practices in policing and minority communities and identify challenges in the region. A list of effective practices will constitute the core conclusions of the consultation and will contribute to a Resource Guide outlining a variety of effective practices for use in policing.

The regional expert consultation is the fourth in a series of consultations organised by the IPMS and providing fora for discussion and exchange of experiences with the view to gather effective practices in policing and minority communities. They contribute to encouraging minorities' participation in the administration of justice through law enforcement and more specifically policing. Launched in 2008, this initiative is based on the principle of participation contained in Article 2 (2) of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities asserting that "persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life". A final consultation on policing will take place in Latin America region later this year.

On 2 and 3 June 2011, IPMS also delivered in Bangkok, Thailand, a training workshop on minority rights for OHCHR staff in the region and relevant UN staff of the UN country team (UNCT) in Thailand. The training programme is the second in a series of regional trainings (the first regional training took place at OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa in September 2010). They aim at strengthening mainstreaming capacity of OHCHR field presences and UNCTs to integrate protection of the rights of minorities into country and regional strategies and development programmes. The aim is achieving greater and shared understanding of definitions, standards, mechanisms and implementation strategies by OHCHR and other UN agencies in addressing the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities as applicable to the realities of the region and within the context of the Declaration.

UN VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND FOR INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

The 24th session of the Board of Trustees was held in Geneva from 7 to 11 February 2011.

The Board recommended for approval 30 grants for representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to attend the 10th session of the PFII and 24 grants for representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to attend the 4th session of the EMRIP. The Fund will, in 2011, also implement its extended mandate to cover indigenous participation in the Human Rights Council and Treaty Bodies' sessions.

More information:

www2.ohchr.org/english/about/funds/indigenous/

UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

The call for application for project grants for 2012 is now closed. The UN Secretary-General will report on the status of the Fund to the General Assembly at its 66th session. Activities are under way to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Fund in 2011.

More information:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Slavery/Pages/SlaveryFundMain.aspx>

REGIONAL CONFERENCE: ADVANCING MINORITY RIGHTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

IPMS organized, together with the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia, a regional conference “Advancing the Rights of Minorities in Central Asia - effective participation in public life.” The conference took place in Bishkek on 21 and 22 June 2011 and was co-organized with the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Centre in Bishkek.

The focus of the conference, which brought together over 80 representatives of Governments, national human rights institutions, minorities, civil society organizations, UN agencies and international organizations, and international experts - including the UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ms Gay McDougall - was effective participation in public life. In separate substantive sessions the participants addressed political participation of minorities, language and culture diversity in education and the media, minority participation in economic life, minority participation in judiciary and policing, consultative structures for minorities, and international minority rights standards. The participants, guided by the presentations of international experts at the outset of each substantive session, discussed how to improve minority participation and highlighted both similarities as well as differences between the countries in the region.

The outcome of the conference was a concluding statement in which the participants pledged to strengthen their efforts in further improving minority participation in their respective countries and to continue dialogue on minority issues.

NEW OHCHR WEBSITE ON MINORITIES - [WWW.OHCHR.ORG/MINORITIES](http://www.ohchr.org/minorities)

IPMS prepared an update and redesign of the OHCHR website dedicated to its work on minority issues. On the new website - www.ohchr.org/minorities - you can find the latest publications, including the IPMS Newsletter, information on the most recent IPMS activities on minority issues, updates regarding the OHCHR Minorities Fellowship Programme, as well as links to relevant OHCHR documents and publications, and additional resources.

The website now also highlights the latest OHCHR news related to minority issues, and provides links to Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Forum on Minority Issues, OHCHR work on racism and discrimination and documents from the last four sessions of the former Working Group on Minorities.

INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON MINORITY ISSUES (IE)

New Independent Expert - Rita Izsak

The Human Rights Council has, at its 17th session, appointed Rita Izsak as the new Independent Expert of Minority Issues. She will succeed Gay McDougall, who was appointed as the first holder of this position in 2005 and whose mandate was renewed in 2008.

Country visits

The IE conducted an official visit to Bulgaria between 4 and 11 July 2011. At the end of the visit, the IE called upon the Government of Bulgaria “to match its EU and NGO inspired policies on Roma integration with Government-led implementation and the financial resources necessary to improve the living conditions experienced by the Roma in Bulgaria, who are more than 10 percent of the population.”

The IE conducted a mission to Rwanda between 31 January and 7 February 2011. On conclusion of the mission the IE issued a statement, highlighting that the objective of her visit was to hold consultations and to examine the human rights situation, while recognizing fully the history of this country and seeking to learn about and benefit from the unique experiences and challenges that Rwanda has faced. The IE looks forward to a continuing and constructive dialogue with the Government of Rwanda and stands ready to support the positive initiatives of the Government.

Other news

The Human Rights Council (HRC) has, during its 16th session, extended the mandate of the Independent Expert of Minority Issues for three years. In the Resolution A/HRC/RES/16/6, adopted without a vote by the HRC on 24 March 2011, the HRC decided to extend the mandate and requested the IE:

- (a) To promote the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, including through consultations with Governments, taking into account existing international standards and national legislation concerning minorities;
- (b) To identify best practices and possibilities for technical cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner, at the request of Governments;
- (c) To apply a gender perspective in his/her work;
- (d) To cooperate closely, while avoiding duplication, with existing relevant United Nations bodies, mandates and mechanisms and with regional organizations;
- (e) To take into account the views of non-governmental organizations on matters pertaining to his/her mandate;
- (f) To guide the work of the Forum on Minority Issues, as decided by the Council in its resolution 6/15;
- (g) To submit annual reports on his/her activities to the Council, including recommendations for effective strategies for the better implementation of the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

More information: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/expert/index.htm>

III. COMMON ACTIVITIES

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMMES

Indigenous Fellowship Programme

As a result of a broad consultation carried out in 2010 on the objectives and format of the Fellowship Programmes, OHCHR Indigenous Peoples and Minority Section (IPMS) decided to reform its training programmes. In the past, the Indigenous Fellowship Programme consisted of four distinct linguistic components (i.e. English, Spanish, French and Russian) which were held during different periods throughout the year.

The first phase of this reform process started in 2011 with the organization in Geneva of one single training programme comprised of four different linguistic groups. This year, the Indigenous Fellowship Programme brought together in Geneva a total of 25 indigenous fellows speaking English, Spanish, French and Russian for a training programme which took place from 20 and 27 June to 22 July. Training sessions were simultaneously interpreted in the four languages.

The training period also coincided with the 4th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), which gave the opportunity to all 25 fellows to observe and more actively participate in the EMRIP. Evaluations carried out at the end of the training programme seem to indicate that the 2011 fellows appreciated this new format as it gave them the possibility to exchange and interact with indigenous representatives of other regions of the world.

The list of participants of our 2011 Indigenous Fellowship Programme is available on our website. For more information, please consult: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/fellowship.htm>

Senior Indigenous Fellowship Programme

In the context of the reform of the Indigenous Fellowship Programme, the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section (IPMS) of OHCHR decided to create in 2011 the position of "Senior Indigenous Fellow". The idea was to offer to an indigenous representative a more practical on-the-job training by directly contributing to the programmes and activities of the IPMS. Mr. Elifuraha Laltaika - a Maasai from Tanzania - was selected as Senior Indigenous Fellow and contributed to the work of IPMS from 9 May to 29 July.

Please note that similar positions might be publicized in future, subject to the availability of funds.

Minorities Fellowship Programme

In 2011, the fellowship programme will enter into the first phase of its reform. Both language components of the programme - English and Arabic - will for the first time take place at the same time - from 14 November to 16 December 2011 at OHCHR Geneva.

Five English-speaking candidates have been selected to participate in the 2011 programme, whereas the selection of five Arabic-speaking fellows is still on-going, as is the selection of a senior minority fellow. You can find the list of participants of the English language component of the programme on the website of the fellowship programme (see below). Once the remaining selections are finalised, all relevant information will be published on the same website.

For more information, please consult <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/fellowprog.htm>.

Fellowship Programme for People of African Descent

In the context of the International Year for People of African Descent, the OHCHR Anti-Discrimination Section launched a Fellowship Programme for People of African Descent. The selection of the fellows has been conducted and they will be in Geneva from 10 October to 4 November 2011.

The Fellowship Programme will provide participants with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the United Nations Human Rights system and its mechanisms, with a focus on issues of particular relevance to people of African descent. This will allow the fellows to better contribute to the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of Afro-descendants in their respective countries and communities.

For more information, please consult: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/IYPADFellowshipProgramme.aspx>

IV. GENERAL UPDATES

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Mission to Mexico

At the end of her mission to Mexico, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay issued a statement on 8 July 2011 in which she explained that she met human rights defenders working on a variety of issues in Oaxaca and in Mexico City. She met victims and relatives of victims of human rights abuses, and held discussions with indigenous representatives and authorities. The High Commissioner drew special attention to the situation of indigenous women, who suffer a triple form of discrimination – for being indigenous, women and poor. “Just as non-indigenous societies have a long way to go before they achieve gender equality, indigenous peoples also need to give women a more prominent role, on an equal footing with men.” The High Commissioner also stressed that she is aware of a number of important developments, such as the ones witnessed in Oaxaca, concerning the recognition of indigenous customary law and traditional political structures, based on community assemblies. She congratulated the indigenous peoples of Mexico for the struggle that led to this recognition, and encouraged them to continue their efforts to win respect of their rights. In particular, she called upon the federal and state governments to explicitly recognize their right to consultation and to free, prior and informed consent.

Mission to Australia

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement upon the conclusion of her visit to Australia on 25 May 2011. In the statement she stressed that the issues of indigenous disadvantage and the treatment of asylum seekers need to be tackled through a human rights based approach, not driven by short term electoral advantage and political goals. The High Commissioner welcomed the National Apology and Australia’s formal recognition of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, along with the significant investment being made to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and education. But also warned that these efforts are being undermined by policies that fail to recognize the right to self-determination for indigenous people, which is a key element of the UN Declaration. She advocated for a fundamental rethink of the measures being taken under the Northern Territory Emergency Response and highlighted that there should be a major effort to ensure not just consultation with the communities concerned in any future measures, but also their consent and active participation.

High Commissioner on assassination of Shahbaz Bhatti

The High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned on 2 March 2011 the assassination of Pakistan’s Minister for Minority Affairs, Shahbaz Bhatti, who was apparently killed because of his opposition to Pakistan’s blasphemy laws. On 4 January, the Governor of Punjab province, Salman Taseer, was also assassinated in Islamabad because of his opposition to the blasphemy laws, and in particular his call for a Christian woman, Asia Bibi, sentenced to death under those laws, to be pardoned. The High Commissioner noted these killings were symptomatic of pervasive violence against religious minorities in Pakistan and a lack of protection for their places of worship.

Full Australia statement available at: www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11062&LangID=E

Full Mexico statement available at: www.hchr.org.mx/files/comunicados/2011/junio/Conferencia_ingles.pdf

Full Statement on Bhatti: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10784&LangID=E>

16TH AND 17TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (HRC)

The HRC held its 16th session between 28 February and 25 March 2011 in Geneva. Several reports concerned minority issues: the Report of the High Commissioner on the Rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/HRC/16/39), and the Compilation of existing manuals, guides, training materials and other tools dealing with minority issues by various UN entities (A/HRC/16/29), the Report of the Independent Expert on minority issues (A/HRC/16/45), and the Report of the Forum on minority issues on its third session (A/HRC/16/46).

HRC held its 17th session between 30 May and 17 June 2011. OHCHR work on minority issues was specifically highlighted in the Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on technical assistance and cooperation on human rights in Kyrgyzstan (A/HRC/17/41).

More information: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/>

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (CERD)

CERD held its 78th session between 14 February and 11 March 2011 in Geneva.

In its session, the Working Group considered State reports from Armenia, Bolivia, Cuba, Ireland, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Rwanda, Serbia, Spain, Uruguay and Yemen. Concerning indigenous peoples, the concluding observations address recommendations to Bolivia, Norway, Rwanda and Uruguay. Concerning minorities, the Committee made recommendations to Armenia, Ireland, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Serbia, Uruguay and Yemen.

On the occasion of its 78th session, CERD also held a thematic discussion on racial discrimination against people of African descent (7 March 2011). It reached an overall agreement to draft a general recommendation on the issues discussed taking into consideration the input received at the discussion. The Committee is now engaged in the drafting of this general recommendation and will hold deliberations on it during its 79th session.

More information available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds78.htm>

COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE (CAT)

CAT held its 46th session between 9 May and 3 June 2011 in Geneva. On this occasion, the CAT considered the State reports from Finland, Ghana, Ireland, Kuwait, Mauritius, Monaco, Slovenia and Turkmenistan. Concluding observations concerning minorities have been addressed to Finland, Ireland, Kuwait, Slovenia and Turkmenistan.

More information on: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/cats46.htm>

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

CEDAW held its 48th session between 17 January and 4 February 2011 in Geneva. During its session, State reports from Bangladesh, Belarus, Israel, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Sri Lanka and South Africa were considered. Concerning minorities, concluding observations have been addressed to Bangladesh, Belarus, Israel and Sri Lanka.

The 49th session of the CEDAW took place between 11 and 29 July 2011 in New York. State reports from Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Italy, Nepal, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Zambia were considered. Concluding observations for these countries are not yet available.

More information: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws48.htm>

SR ON RACISM: STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION A THREAT TO ROMA AND VICTIMS OF CASTE SYSTEMS

Githu Muigai, the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism, stressed that deep-rooted discrimination, prejudices, and intolerance are common threads that run through the lives of the Roma people in Europe and the victims of caste or similar systems of inherited status in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

In his latest report, the expert assessed racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance against Roma, particularly in Europe, as well as discrimination based on work and descent in different regions.

View the full report: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A-HRC-17-40.pdf>

SR ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF VISITED PARAGUAY

The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, visited Paraguay from 23 to 30 March 2011. At the end of his visit he spoke of “enormous societal inequalities in terms of distribution of wealth, access to public or private education, political influence, ethnic and linguistic minority status.” The expert noted the weakness of implementation mechanisms, especially in the Chaco region where many indigenous peoples live.

The Special Rapporteur drew special attention to the Paraguayan indigenous people’s long history of suffering from discrimination, neglect, harassment and economic exploitation. While noting that the indigenous representatives he met mostly agreed that the general attitude towards their traditional beliefs and practices has become more respectful in recent years, Mr. Bielefeldt stressed that “the imposition of religious doctrines and practices, possibly against their will, is not a matter of the past only but persists to a certain degree until today.”

Full statement: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10903&LangID=E>

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (CESCR)

CESCR held its 46th session between 2 and 20 May 2011 in Geneva. In its session, the Working Group considered State reports from Germany, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Yemen. It mentioned indigenous issues in Russia and raised questions concerning minorities in all above mentioned countries.

More information: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrs46.htm>

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

CRC held its 57th session between 30 May and 17 June 2011 in Geneva. Conclusions and recommendations concerning indigenous peoples (I) or minorities (M) feature in the CRC considerations of: Cambodia (I, M), Costa Rica (I, M), the Czech Republic (M) and Finland (M, I).

More: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs57.htm>

MYANMAR: SITUATION OF ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS RESTRICTS TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, warned that “the situation of ethnic minority groups in the border areas presents serious limitations to the Government’s intention to transition to democracy.”

“Violence continues in many of these areas, while systematic militarization contributes to human rights abuses,” the expert said at the end of his mission (16-23 May 2011) to neighbouring Thailand to gather information about the situation inside Myanmar.

The expert visited Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son and Bangkok in order to gather information about the situation inside Myanmar, important for the preparation of his next report to the UN General Assembly to be submitted later this year. He met with various stakeholders including civil society and community based organizations, experts, UN officials, and diplomats, he also met with the Foreign Minister of Thailand and Myanmar’s Ambassador to Thailand, and spoke with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi by telephone.

Full statement: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11046&LangID=E>

HUNGARY: TIME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The UN Special Rapporteur on racism, Githu Muigai, drew attention to a number of crucial challenges yet to be overcome in Hungary at the end of his mission to the country (23-27 May 2011).

“Efforts undertaken by the Government to address the needs of, and problems faced by national and ethnic minorities ought to be noted. However, it is important to ensure that the recent constitutional changes will not weaken the current legal and institutional framework for the protection of minorities rights,” said the expert.

The expert stressed that the situation of Roma has worsened in the last few years. They have been the most affected by Hungary’s difficult transition period from socialism to a market-based economy and they continue to face racism, racial discrimination and intolerance in the areas of employment, education, housing and health.

Statement in full: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11085&LangID=E>

AUSTRIA AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

UN Independent Expert in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed encouraged the Austrian Government to approach cultural diversity as an invaluable resource and to take concrete measures to promote it. “The Government should mainstream cultural diversity and the cultural heritage of Austria’s diverse populations by incorporating minority cultures and histories in public schooling curricula, media and cultural activities,” she said and added, that Austria “should also promote intercultural understanding and minority language proficiency in all official institutions and among civil servants.”

The expert welcomed a number of initiatives to promote cultural diversity and cultural rights, especially the codification of a Roma language, but said that the approach was fragmented. She recommended that a unified framework and an institution be put in place to promote cultural diversity, oversee cultural heritage matters and promote the right to participate in cultural life.

Statement in full: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10940&LangID=E>

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW PROCESS

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group held its 11th session between 2 and 13 May 2011.

At the 11th session the following countries were reviewed, most of which received conclusions or recommendations concerning indigenous people (I) or minorities (M): Belgium (M), Denmark (M), Palau (I), Somalia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Latvia (M), Sierra Leone, Singapore, Suriname (M), Greece (M), Samoa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (M), Sudan (M), Hungary (M), and Papua New Guinea (I).

The 12th session of the UPR Working Group is scheduled to take place from 3 to 14 October 2011. The following countries will be reviewed: Tajikistan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Antigua and Barbuda, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand, Ireland, Togo, the Syrian Arab Republic, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Iceland, Zimbabwe, Lithuania, Uganda, Timor Leste and the Republic of Moldova.

On the website of the Universal Periodic Review you can also find the calendar of reviews for the 2nd UPR cycle (from 13th to 26th session), in which 14 countries will be reviewed during each session.

The UPR process - new modalities for the 2nd cycle

The Human Rights Council set up at its 12th session in September 2009 an "Open-ended intergovernmental working group on the review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council," which also undertook a review of the UPR process. The Human Rights Council adopted, on 25 March 2011, “Outcome of the review on the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council,” which brings some new modalities for the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review Process. You can review these new modalities in the resolution A/HRC/RES/16/21.

More information available on: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>

Resolution A/HRC/RES/16/21: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A.HRC.RES.16.21_en.pdf

Calendar of reviews, 2nd cycle: http://www2.ohchr.org/SPdocs/UPR/UPR-FullCycleCalendar_2nd.doc

**INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES AND
MINORITIES
SECTION**

V. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

8 August-2 September 2011: The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination will hold its 79th session in Geneva and will consider State reports from Albania, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Kenya, Maldives, Malta, Paraguay, the Ukraine, and United Kingdom.

9 August: International Day of the World's Indigenous People (un.org/en/events/indigenousday)

12-23 September 2011: The Committee on Migrant Workers will hold its 15th session in Geneva and consider Argentina, Chile, and Guatemala, as well as adopt a list of issues for Paraguay and Tajikistan.

12-30 September 2011: The Human Rights Council will hold its 18th session in Geneva.

19-23 September 2011: The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will hold its 6th session in Geneva and will consider Spain, China, and Peru.

19 September-7 October 2011: The Committee on the Rights of the Child will hold its 58th session and will consider Iceland, Italy, Syrian Arab republic, Panama, Republic of Korea, Greece, and the Seychelles. Sweden will be considered under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and Greece under Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

30 September 2011: The Committee on the Rights of the Child will hold a day of general discussion: "Children of incarcerated parents".

3-5 October 2011: The Social Forum will take place in Geneva.

3-14 October 2011: The UPR Working Group will hold its 12th session in Geneva (more information end of page 8).

3-21 October 2011: The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women will hold its 50th session in Geneva and will examine Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mauritius, Montenegro, Oman, and Paraguay.

17 October-4 November 2011: The Human Rights Committee will hold its 103rd session and will consider Jamaica, Kuwait, Norway, Iran, and Cote d'Ivoire. Country Report Task Forces will consider and adopt list of issues on reports submitted by Armenia, Lithuania, Kenya, Cape Verde (in the absence of a report). Task Forces will consider and adopt list of issues on reports submitted by Uruguay, Cameroon, Monaco, Denmark, Moldova.

18 October 2011: The Committee against Torture will hold the 13th Meeting of States parties in Geneva to elect members to replace the five current members whose terms expire on 31 December 2011.

31 October-25 November 2011: The Committee against Torture will hold its 47th session in Geneva and will consider Belarus, Bulgaria, Djibouti, Germany, Greece, Madagascar, Morocco, Paraguay, and Sri Lanka.

14-18 November 2011: The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment will hold its 15th session.

14 November-2 December 2011: The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights will hold its 47th session in Geneva and will consider State reports from Argentina, Cameroon, Estonia, Israel, and Turkmenistan.

28 November-2 December 2011: The Board of Trustees of the UN Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery will hold its 16th session in Geneva.

29-30 November 2011: Fourth session of the Forum on Minority Issues will take place in Geneva.

Location/contacts:

OHCHR - IPMS
Av. Giuseppe Motta, 48
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Tel: + 41 (0) 22 928 91 64

Fax: + 41 (0) 22 928 90 66

Web: www.ohchr.org

Mailing Address:

OHCHR - IPMS
Palais des Nations
Avenue de la Paix, 8-14
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

**Relevant email addresses in
OHCHR:**

Indigenous Fellowship:
fellowship@ohchr.org

Minorities Fellowship:
minorityfellowships@ohchr.org

Voluntary Fund for Indigenous
Populations:
IndigenousFunds@ohchr.org

Voluntary Fund on Contempo-
rary Forms of Slavery:
SlaveryFund@ohchr.org

Expert Mechanism on the Rights
of Indigenous Issues:
expertmechanism@ohchr.org

Special Rapporteur (Indigenous
Peoples):
indigenous@ohchr.org

Independent Expert (Minorities):
gfox@ohchr.org

Forum on Minority Issues:
minorityforum@ohchr.org