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2007 Minority Fellowship Programme

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has since 2005, launched an annual fellowship programme for minority representatives as part of the office's capacity building initiatives. Through this programme, OHCHR aims to give persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities - particularly young minority women and men - an opportunity to gain knowledge on the UN system and mechanisms dealing with international human rights in general and minority rights in particular. The Fellowship Programme is intended to assist organizations and communities in protecting and promoting the rights of minorities they represent/belong to. So far, 21 minority representatives have participated in the 2005 and 2006 fellowship programmes. Following their participation in the programme, one of the fellows was appointed a board member of Minority Rights Group International, another was appointed to the Canadian Council of Muslim Women and a further person to the Iraqi Minorities Council. One of the fellows has started working as a United Nations Development Programme country programme officer in Nepal and a further former fellow was employed as a consultant with OHCHR to assist in developing a database of minority NGOs. Additionally as a follow-up to the programme, OHCHR organized a training workshop on minority issues in one municipality of Bulgaria with different Roma sub-groups, the outcome of which was concrete, namely the establishment of an advisory council of minorities to the local authority. Five persons have been chosen

for the 2007 fellowship programme. Further information on the Fellows will follow in the future.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/fellowprog.htm>

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Minority Profile and Matrix

We would like to draw your attention to the tool called Minority Profile and Matrix which has been prepared by the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Unit. This aims to review the promotion and practical realization of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and to broaden understanding of minority rights and minority issues (see document attached to this letter). It can be used for trainings and so far it has been completed by former OHCHR minority fellows during their fellowship in Geneva and has been distributed in draft form to OHCHR country officers, thematic and treaty body mandates. It was produced as a document of the Working Group at its 12th session. The Minority Profile and Matrix may be found at the following web site page as UN Document, E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2006/3.

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/group/main.htm>

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Independent Expert on Minority Issues

The Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ms Gay McDougall, will present four reports to the Human Rights Council on 20 March 2007. Ms McDougall's Annual Report has a particular focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty and minorities. The Thematic report is a review of the MDG country reports and on the poverty

reduction strategies. The other two reports will summarize the findings of her two country missions conducted in 2006 in Hungary (26 June-3 July) and in Ethiopia (28 November-12 December).

Two reports are already available at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/4session/documentation.htm>

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Working Group on Minorities

Please note that updated information regarding the Working Group on Minorities will be posted on the website as soon as possible.

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Informal Inter-agency meeting on minority issues in Geneva

OHCHR organized an informal inter-agency meeting on 19 February 2007 in Geneva to update agencies on developments on minority rights and issues within the work of OHCHR, such as the Minority Fellowship Programme. Developments in other agencies was discussed, such as the holding of UNDP's first consultation on minority issues, and ideas were considered for advancing cooperation for the mainstreaming of minority issues in the work of the United Nations.

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UNDP Consultation on mainstreaming minority issues in development processes

In October 2006 in New York a first consultation was organized by UNDP in cooperation with the independent expert on minority issues and OHCHR to consider the question of engaging with minorities in development processes. The conclusions and recommendations emanating from this meeting concerned possible steps for the

future incorporation of minority issues into the work of UNDP on democratic governance, social inclusion, conflict prevention and resolution, and civil society partnerships. As a follow-up to the consultation, the Democratic Governance Group within the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy has prioritized further work on "Minorities in Development" in its workplan for 2007.

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OHCHR Handbook for NGOs

OHCHR has developed a Handbook for NGOs which aims to provide the non-governmental organizations with a comprehensive and user-friendly guide to the work of OHCHR, including key information on human rights mechanisms, entry points for NGOs and contact details with a view to assisting NGOs in identifying areas of possible cooperation and partnership with OHCHR; it also anticipates the changes of the current United Nations reform process. The Handbook is up to date as of June 2006, and is currently available electronically only, in English and Arabic. Efforts are underway to secure its translation in other UN languages in the next few months.

If you wish to download the Handbook, please visit:

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/ngohandbook.htm>

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Treaty Bodies and country reviews:

The **Human Rights Committee** will hold its 89th Session during 12 - 30 March 2007 in New York, its is scheduled to consider the following reports of States parties to ICCPR:
Madagascar: Monday, 12 March 2007 from 3.00. to 6.00 p.m. and Tuesday, 13 March 2007 from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Chile: Wednesday, 14 March 2007 from 3.00 to 6.00 p.m. and Thursday, 15 March 2007 from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Rwanda: Monday, 19 March 2007 from 3.00 to 6.00 p.m. and Tuesday, 20 March 2007 from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Barbados: Wednesday, 21 March 2007 from 3.00 to 6.00 p.m. and Thursday, 22 March 2007 from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

More information at

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs89.htm>

The **Committee Against Torture** will hold its 38th Session during 30 April - 18 May 2007 in Geneva. It is scheduled to review 7 States parties reports: *Italy, Ukraine, Denmark, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Poland and Japan*.

More information at

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/cats38.htm>

The **Committee on Migrant Workers** will meet for its 6th Session during 23 to 27 April 2007 in Geneva and is scheduled to review *Egypt's* Initial Report and prepare a list of issues on the State party report on *Ecuador*.

More information at

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmwc/mws06.htm>

The **Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** will hold its 38th session at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 14 May to 1 June 2007. It is scheduled to review *Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Pakistan, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Syrian Arab Republic and Vanuatu*.

More information at

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/38sess.htm>

The **Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** held its 70th Session during 19 February - 9 March 2007 in Geneva. It has reviewed *Israel, Liechtenstein, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, India, Canada, Antigua and Barbuda, Democratic Republic of*

Congo, Nicaragua and Congo. Other countries scheduled for consideration were:

Czech Republic: 1 March 2007 at 3 p.m. and on 2 March 2007 at 10 a.m.

Ethiopia: Friday, 2 March 2007 at 3 p.m.

More information at

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds70.htm>

The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** will hold its next session from 21 May to 8 June 2007. The Committee will consider the following reports:

CRC: *Kazakhstan; Maldives; Slovakia; Uruguay*

CRC OPSC: *Bangladesh; Guatemala; Sudan; Ukraine*

CRC OPAC: *Guatemala; Monaco; Norway; Sweden*

All the reports are available on the Committee's webpage at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs45.htm>

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Assisting Communities Together (ACT) - providing grants for human rights education activities

The importance of local efforts to promote respect for human rights is widely shared among Governments, non-governmental organizations, the academic community and human rights advocates from across the globe. In this context, OHCHR and UNDP launched in 1998 the Assisting Communities Together (ACT) Project, a joint project which makes small grants available for non-governmental organizations, local associations and other similar institutions carrying out human rights promotional activities in local communities.

The ACT Project focuses on a "bottom-up approach" by encouraging action at the community level with a view to improve human rights respect in practical ways, relevant to

people's specific conditions. Since 1998, OHCHR and UNDP have implemented a pilot (1998-2000), second (2000-2001), third (2001-2003) and fourth (2003-2005) phase of the ACT Project. The fifth (2005-2007) phase was launched in November 2005.

Throughout the years the ACT Project, principally aimed at strengthening local capacities for human rights education, training and public information, has also contributed, as reported by UN colleagues in the field and by grant recipients, to the following objectives:

- improvement of the human rights record at the local and national levels;
- bridging of the gap between the international and local levels;
- improvement of the relationship between civil society and local or national authorities;
- improvement of the relationship between civil society and the local United Nations presence.

Projects which may be assisted in 2007 are with respect to Afghanistan or Armenia.

More information is available at :

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/act.htm>
