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Staff at OHCHR

Mr. Manpreet Singh has joined the Minorities team as an intern. He is a Sikh activist from India and is preparing his Masters in Political Science at the ICFAI University in New Delhi. His E-mail is: indigenous-interns@ohchr.org

English speaking Minority Fellowship Programme 2008

The fellowship will take place in the OHCHR office in Geneva from 1 April-30 June 2008.

The selection of fellows is currently being finalized and the successful candidates will be announced early February on our website <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/fellowprog.htm>.

Contact person: Ilona Alexander
ialexander@ohchr.org

Expert meeting on Integration with diversity in policing: Vienna 15-16 January 2008

OHCHR in cooperation with the International Labour Office (ILO) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as well as the Independent Expert on Minority Issues held an expert meeting on integration with diversity in policing in Vienna, Austria from 15 to 16 January 2008, kindly hosted by the Austrian Government.

Participants included professionals in the police service from different regions and countries of the world including Brazil, Canada, Cameroun, Hungary, India, Ireland, Nigeria, Pakistan, Samoa and South Africa as well as representatives of relevant inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and Permanent Missions to the United Nations.

The objective of the meeting was to consider a draft guidance note on the practical application of human rights principles and provisions related to integration with diversity and to share good experiences and proposals for further action (the text of the first draft of the guidance note is available at

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/docs/12/2006-wp1.doc>. The meeting decided to work towards the finalization of the guidance note. A report of the meeting will be available in February 2008.

For further information please contact: Ilona Alexander ialexander@ohchr.org

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Independent Expert on Minority Issues

The Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall, participated in a Regional Workshop on Minority Issues in Southeast Asia in Bangkok from 21 to 23 January organized by the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) in cooperation with the International Movement Against Racial Discrimination (IMADR), Minority Rights Group International (MRG), as well as the Office of the Regional Representative of OHCHR and the UN Development Programme. Over 30 participants representing numerous minority and indigenous groups in the region participated in the workshop where they shared their experiences and concerns in regard to such issues as cultural, language and religious rights, economic and political participation, the situation of minority women, poverty, health and education. In addition, participants learned about United Nations standards and protection mechanisms for minorities and how to engage with the UN human rights system.

Contact person for more information: Graham Fox gfox@ohchr.org.
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Forum on Minority Issues

Replacing the former Working Group on Minorities, the Forum on Minority Issues was established on 28 September 2007 at the 6th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) as a platform for promoting dialogue and cooperation on minority issues and for contributing to the work of the Independent Expert on minority issues.

Its tasks will be:

- * To identify issues and best practices
- * To make recommendations on the implementation of the 1992 United Nations Minorities Declaration
- * To provide the Independent Expert on Minority Issues with information
- * To contribute to the High Commissioner's efforts of improving the co-operation among United Nations mechanisms, bodies and specialized agencies, Funds and Programmes on activities related to the promotion and protection of the rights of minorities

The Forum will be open to the participation of:

- * States
- * UN mechanisms, bodies and agencies
- * National human rights institutions
- * Academics and experts
- * NGOs

The Forum will meet for 2 days every year. The Forum Chair will be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council in consultation with regional groups and in accordance with regional rotation.

The Independent Expert on minority issues will guide the work of the Forum by recommending focus topics. She will also transmit the Forum's thematic recommendations to the HRC.

It is suggested that the first meeting of the Forum should take place in September 2008. Details will follow in due course.
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Indigenous Peoples and the HRC - Creation of a new expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples

With respect to indigenous issues, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 6/36 on 14 December 2007 in which it decided to establish a subsidiary expert mechanism to provide the Council with thematic expertise on the rights of indigenous peoples. The thematic expertise will focus mainly on studies and research-based advice and the mechanism may suggest proposals to the Council for its consideration and approval, within the scope of its work as set out by the Council. The expert mechanism will comprise of five independent experts, who serve for a three-year period and may be re-elected for one additional period. In Res. 6/36 the HRC strongly recommends that, in the selection and appointment process, the Council give due regard to experts of indigenous origin.

The creation of this new mechanism is part of the process of the reform of the United Nations human rights system. It followed the adoption of the HRC Institution building package (GA Res.60/251; HRC Res.5/1) and the exchanges of ideas on the most appropriate mechanisms to continue the work of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations which followed the adoption of HRC Res.6/16.

For further information please visit:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/groups/groups-01.htm>.

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21st session of the UN Voluntary Fund on Indigenous Populations

On 4 February 2008 the UN Voluntary Fund on Indigenous Populations will examine a total of 455 applications for travel grants from indigenous representatives to attend the 7th session of the Permanent forum on indigenous issues that will take place in April 2008 and

the 1st session of the New expert mechanism on indigenous peoples rights which will take place in October 2008.

The 5 Board members currently are:

Mr. Lars Anders Baer (Sami, Sweden), Mr. Nadir Bekirov (Crimean Tatar, Ukraine), Mr. Ahmed Mahiou (Amazigh, Algeria), Ms. Jannie Lasimbang (Kadazan, Malaysia) and Ms. Tarcila Rivera Zea (Quechua, Peru).

Contact person for more information: Mélanie Clerc mclerc@ohchr.org.

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Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

General Assembly Resolution 60/251, decided that the Human Rights Council shall "undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfillment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments...".

NGOs, wishing to submit information for consideration and possible inclusion by OHCHR in a summary of stakeholders' information for this UPR review, are invited to send their contributions. The deadlines for submissions by NGOs for the first and second UPR sessions have passed, with the exception of an extended deadline until 8 February 2008 with regard to these countries: **Switzerland, Pakistan, Zambia, Japan, Ukraine, Sri Lanka, France, Tonga, Romania and Mali**. For more information see <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/upr/index.htm>.

NGOs are encouraged to limit their submission to a 5-page document, to which more detailed reports may be attached for reference. This information will be available on line for others to access. Submissions should be sent to the following email address: UPRsubmissions@ohchr.org.

Contact person: Erik Friberg efriberg@ohchr.org.
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7th session of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent

The seventh session of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent took place at the United Nations Office in Geneva from 14 to 18 January 2008.

There was active participation on behalf of many representatives and the session produced an important input to the next session of the Preparatory Committee. The themes discussed included: Administration of justice, the media, access to education, racism and employment, racism and health, racism and housing, participation of people of African descent in political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society and in the advancement and economic development in their countries, Millennium Development Goals, empowerment of women of African descent and racial profiling.

Recommendations of the session, including for example the suggestion that the UN should create a fellowship programme for people of African descent, can be found at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/groups/docs/Recommendations30012008.pdf>.

Contact person for more information: Marie-Dominique Perret mperret@ohchr.org.

6th session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

The sixth session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action took place from 21 January to 1 February 2008 at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

Provisional agenda and draft programme of work can be found at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/groups/implementation-6th.htm>. The report

of the session will also be available at this website shortly.

Contact person for more information: Marie-Dominique Perret mperret@ohchr.org.

Second session of the Preparatory Committee (Prep-Com) for Durban Review Conference: 21 April-2 May 2008

PrepCom dates in 2008

The first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Durban Review Conference will take place from **21 April to 2 May 2008 in Geneva**. During this session of the Preparatory Committee will, in accordance with its decision 1/14, discuss the organization of the work of the Conference and other matters.

The last session of the Preparatory Committee will take place from 6 to 17 October 2008 also in Geneva.

For a full text report of the organizational session of the PrepCom, including decisions taken in relation to the participation of NGOs see

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/groups/prep_committee_durban/docs/prepc_omdraft.doc.

Contact person for more information: Marie-Dominique Perret mperret@ohchr.org.

Treaty Bodies and country reviews

14 January to 1 February 2008 - CRC

The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** held its 47th session from 14 January to 1 February 2008. The following State reports were considered: **Dominican Republic, Georgia, and Timor-Leste**. Under the Optional Protocol to CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the following State reports were considered: **Chile, Kuwait and Timor-Leste**. Under the Optional Protocol to the

CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict the following State reports were considered: **Chile, Germany, Ireland, Kuwait and Timor-Leste**. Concluding observations will soon be available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crc47.htm>.

14 January to 1 February 2008 - CEDAW
The **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** held its 40th session from 14 January to 1 February 2008. The following State party reports were examined during this session: **Saudi Arabia, Bolivia, Burundi, France, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Morocco and Sweden**. Concluding observations will soon be available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws40.htm>.

18 February to 7 March 2008 (to be confirmed) - CERD
The next session of the **Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)** is scheduled to take place from 18 February to 7 March 2008 in Geneva. The Committee will consider the following State reports during the session: **Republic of Moldova, Italy, Republic of Fiji Islands, Belgium, Dominican Republic, United States of America and Nicaragua**. Under the Committee's review procedure, whereby it considers country situations in the absence of a State party report, the following are tentatively listed for review: **Gambia, Monaco, Bulgaria, United Arab Emirates and Panama**.

For more information please refer to: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds72.htm>.
