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English speaking Minority Fellowship Programme 2008

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

The following candidates have been selected to participate:

Mr Fedor Kondur (Rom from Ukraine)
Ms Nilofar d/o Abdul Hussain (Hazara Shiat from Afghanistan)
Ms Anna Dreyzina (Russian from Azerbaijan)
Mr Khalid Hussain (Bihari from Bangladesh)
Mr Manpreet Singh (Sikh from India)

For more information see:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/fellowprog.htm>.

Contact person: Ilona Alexander
ialexander@ohchr.org

Independent Expert on Minority Issues

On 28 February 2008, the Independent Expert on minority issues, Ms. Gay McDougall, joined the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Mr. Miloon Kothari, in issuing a press statement calling on the United States Government to halt ongoing evictions and to take immediate steps to protect the human rights of African-Americans affected by Hurricane Katrina and the demolition of public housing in New Orleans, Louisiana. The full statement is available at:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/907604B6DAF5E2F1C12573FD007AD7DC?opendocument>

The Permanent Mission of **Greece** informed the Independent Expert that her request for a **country visit** in 2008 has been accepted. The visit is tentatively planned for September 2008.

In March the Independent Expert will attend the 7th session of the Human Rights Council for the annual interactive dialogue regarding her activities, including country visits and thematic work that she has undertaken. Her annual report to be presented to the Council has as its thematic focus consideration of the

issues of minorities and the discriminatory denial or deprivation of citizenship. The Independent Expert's mandate will also be reviewed by the Human Rights Council during this session as a part of the general review, rationalization and improvement of special procedures mandates.

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.

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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.

The first meeting of the Forum is scheduled for 4-5 September 2008, immediately prior to the 9th session of the Human Rights Council which is planned for 8 - 25 September 2008. Details will follow in due course.

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UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples Issues

The United Nations Development Group approved Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues on 1 February 2008. The Guidelines are designed to assist UN Country Teams integrate indigenous peoples' issues into country policies and programmes. The Guidelines were drafted by a group on UN organizations and specialized agencies under the aegis of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.

The text is available at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/docs/guidelines.pdf>.

Let us hope that we can have similar guidelines for minorities one day ☺

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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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Rights & Democracy UPR workshop 15 March 2008

The NGO Rights & Democracy is conducting a training workshop on the UPR on 15 March 2008. If you have the opportunity to be in Geneva on 15 March 2008, you can apply to participate. Please note that travel expenses are NOT covered. The workshop is targeted especially at representatives of NGOs from developing countries whose countries are reviewed through the UPR in 2008-2009 (for the list see:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/uprlist.pdf>).

Participants from **Morocco, Indonesia and Colombia** are especially encouraged to apply. The application deadline is 9 March 2008 and application materials as well as further information can be obtained from:

Cynthia Gervais
Director
Geneva Office of Rights & Democracy
Route de Ferney,150
1218 Le Grand Saconnex (Geneva)
Switzerland
Office: +41 (0) 22 791 6336

Fax: +41 (0) 22 791 6328
Mobile: + 41 (0) 78 900 8445
E-mail: cgervais@dd-rd.ch
Website: www.dd-rd.ch

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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**. For provisional agenda adopted during the first session see:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G07/135/93/PDF/G0713593.pdf?OpenElement>.

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/prepcomdraft.doc.

Contact person for more information: Sandra Aragon saragon@ohchr.org.

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21 March - the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Every year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights organizes a special event to commemorate 21 March - the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The theme for this year's commemoration is *Dignity and Justice - the Cornerstones of Combating Racial Discrimination*.

The Office will organize a high level panel discussion that will take place on 18 March 2008, in Palais des Nations, Room XXI, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The following guest speakers will participate in the panel discussion:

1. Mr. Sergei A. Ordzhonikidze, Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva
2. Ms. Louise Arbour, High Commissioner for Human Rights
3. Mr. Abdou Diouf, Secretary General of Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
4. Mr. Doudou Diène, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance
5. Ms. Jasminka Dzumhur (NGO Medica, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Participation of ECOSOC accredited NGOs and media is welcome. After the end of the presentations there will be time for interactive dialogue with the audience.

Contact person for more information: Tania Naydenova tnaydenova@ohchr.org.

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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 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 are 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**. The Committee pointed out that the report by Saudi Arabia does not provide information regarding women belonging to ethnic, religious or other minorities and urged the Swedish Government to take effective measures to eliminate discrimination against immigrants, refugees and minority women. Concluding observations are available at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws40.htm>.

18 February to 7 March 2008 - CERD

The session of the **Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)** is taking place from 18 February until 7 March 2008. The Committee considered 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 States were also reviewed: **Gambia, Monaco, United Arab Emirates and Panama**. The Committee requested updated data on education, poverty and unemployment for ethnic groups and minorities from the Belgian and Fijian Government. Additionally, the Committee discussed the situation of Roma in Italy and Latinos & African Americans in the USA in relation to police brutality, violence, abuse, Medicare and issues related to sexual and reproductive health. Concluding observations will soon be available at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds72.htm>.

14 April to 25 April 2008 - CMW

The next session of the **Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW)** is scheduled to take place from 14 April to 25 April 2008 in Geneva. The Committee will consider the following State reports during the session: **Bolivia and Syrian Arab Republic**. For more information please refer to:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/cmws08.htm>.

28 April to 16 May 2008 - CESCR

The next session of the **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)** is scheduled to take place from 28 April to 16 May 2008 in Geneva. The Committee will consider the following State reports during the session: **Benin, France, India and Bolivia**. For more information please refer to:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrs40.htm>

28 April to 16 May 2008 - CAT

The next session of the **Committee against Torture (CAT)** is scheduled to take place from 28 April to 16 May 2008 in Geneva. The Committee will consider the following State reports during the session: **Australia, Sweden, Iceland, Algeria, Indonesia, Zambia, Republic of Macedonia and Costa Rica**. For more information see:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/cats40.htm>
