



Table of contents

- **Minority Fellowship Programmes 2008**
- **Independent Expert on Minority Issues**
- **Forum on Minority Issues**
- **Universal Periodic Review**
- **Durban Review Conference Preparatory Process**
- **Treaty Bodies and country reviews**

The Independent Expert has been preparing for two upcoming **country visits** - **Guyana** (28 July to 2 August 2008) and **Greece** (8-16 September 2008). The Permanent Mission of **Kazakhstan** has also informed the Independent Expert that her request for a country visit in 2008 has been accepted.

Contact person for more information: Graham Fox gfox@ohchr.org.

Forum on Minority Issues

The inaugural session of the Forum was scheduled for 4-5 September 2008 at the United Nations (Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland). *At the moment it is highly likely that the session will be postponed for later in the year.* We will inform you as soon as we can. The thematic issue for consideration by the inaugural session will be minorities and access to education. The Independent Expert invites interested parties to compile and submit information on minorities and access to education prior to the session of the Forum. Further information regarding the Forum, including guidelines for submission of information, accreditation procedures, and Secretariat contact details, will be distributed shortly and will also be available on the website of the Forum at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/forum.htm>.

Contact person for more information: Graham Fox gfox@ohchr.org.

Minority Fellowship Programmes 2008

The *English-speaking* fellowship took place at the OHCHR office in Geneva from 1 April-30 June 2008. The call for applications for 2009 will be made in late summer 2008. Keep an eye on our website.

It is expected that 4 fellows will be chosen for the 2008 *Arabic-speaking* fellowship which should take place 10-28 November 2008. **The application deadline is 1 August 2008.** More information and an application form (in Arabic) can be found on our website <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/fellowprog.htm>.

Contact person: Ilona Alexander
ialexander@ohchr.org.

Independent Expert on Minority Issues

Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

General Assembly Resolution 60/251, decided that the Human Rights Council (HRC) 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...".

The first session of the UPR Working Group (UPR WG) of the HRC took place from 7-18 April 2008 and considered the human rights record of the following countries: Bahrain, Ecuador, Tunisia, Morocco, Indonesia, Finland, United Kingdom, India, Brazil, Philippines, Algeria, Poland, Netherlands, South Africa, Czech Republic, and Argentina.

The second session of the UPR WG took place from 5-19 May 2008 and considered the human rights record of the following countries: Gabon, Ghana, Peru, Guatemala, Benin, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Pakistan, Zambia, Japan, Ukraine, Sri Lanka, France, Tonga, Romania, and Mali.

In June 2008, at the eighth session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), the HRC plenary adopted outcome documents on each country reviewed at the 1st and 2nd sessions of UPR WG. The outcome documents of the following countries included recommendations related to minorities: **Finland, Poland, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, India, Argentina, South Africa, Switzerland, France, Romania, Guatemala, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.**

The reports, as adopted by the UPR WG, as well as statements by States and the outcome documents are accessible at the UPR section of the Extranet at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/form.htm>.

The archived meetings of the sessions can be viewed through the UN webcast (<http://www.un.org/webcast/unhrc/index.asp>).

The third session of the UPR WG is scheduled from 1 to 12 December 2008 and will consider the following countries: Botswana, Bahamas, Burundi, Luxembourg, Barbados, Montenegro, United Arab

Emirates, Israel, Liechtenstein, Serbia, Turkmenistan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Uzbekistan, and Tuvalu.

NGOs, wishing to submit information for consideration and possible inclusion by OHCHR in a summary of stakeholders' input for this UPR review, are invited to send their contributions. The **deadline** for submission of contributions by NGOs to the third session of the WG on the UPR has been set at **14 July 2008**. Please note that the page limit for submissions is 5 pages when submitted by individual stakeholders, and 10 pages when submitted by large coalitions of stakeholders. More detailed reports may be attached for reference only. This information will be available on line for others to access. Submissions should be sent to the following email address: UPRsubmissions@ohchr.org.

For more information see <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>.

Contact person: Erik Friberg
efriberg@ohchr.org

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Durban Review Conference Preparatory Process

The first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for Durban Review Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held a special extension session on 26 May (at the beginning of the first intergovernmental working group session) in order to decide the date, duration and venue of the conference. It was decided to hold the Durban Review Conference in Geneva from **20-24 April 2009**.

The first session of the intersessional open-ended intergovernmental working group to follow up the work of the PrepCom took place in Geneva from 16-30 May 2008. The Working Group is expected to collect information to be included in the draft outcome document to be considered at the 2009 Review Conference. In order to achieve its task, the OHCHR

Secretariat has prepared a questionnaire for all stakeholders, including NGOs, that is available on line in English, (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/docs/questionnaire1st.pdf>), French (http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/docs/questionnaire1st_fr.pdf) and Spanish (http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/docs/questionnaire1st_sp.pdf).

The **Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean**, Preparatory to the Durban Review Conference, was held in Brasilia, Brazil between 17 and 19 June 2008. This was the first of the Regional Conferences to be held and resulted in the adoption of a an outcome document by Member States from this region that evaluates progress made and challenges that still exist in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in the region. The document will be an important input for the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference to consider in the lead up to the Review Conference itself.

The **Regional Conference for Africa**, Preparatory to the Durban Review Conference, will be held in Abuja, Nigeria **between 24 and 26 August 2008**.

For further information please consult: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/regional.htm>.

The second substantive PrepCom will take place from **6 to 17 October 2008** in Geneva. NGOS wishing to apply for accreditation can still do so by filling in a questionnaire. For more information see <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/ngo.htm>.

Contact E-mail for more information: adusecretariat@ohchr.org.

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Treaty Bodies and country reviews

28 April to 16 May 2008 - CESCR

The **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)** held its 40th session from 28 April to 16 May 2008 in Geneva. The Committee considered the following State Reports during the session: **Benin, France, India, and Bolivia**. In the Concluding Observations to the State Report of *India*, the Committee expressed concern about the negative effect of cultural stereotypes and personal laws of minority groups on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by minority women. Concluding observations are available at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrs40.htm>.

28 April to 16 May 2008 - CAT

The 40th session of the **Committee against Torture (CAT)** was held from 28 April to 16 May 2008 in Geneva. The Committee considered 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>.

19 May to 6 June 2008 - CRC

The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** held its 48th session from 19 May to 6 June 2008. The Committee considered the following State reports during the session: **Bulgaria, Eritrea, Georgia, Serbia, and Sierra Leone**. Under the Optional Protocol to CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the following State reports were considered: **Republic of Korea and United States of America**.

In its Concluding Observation to the report of Bulgaria, the Committee, while commending efforts undertaken - such as the National Action Plan on the Decade of Roma Inclusion and Health Strategy for Disadvantaged Persons from the Ethnic Minorities, highlighted several shortcomings, including

the particularly limited and inequitable access to adequate health-care services for Romani children, and the relatively high infant mortality rate, the common practice of segregating Romani patients in hospital facilities. The recommendations of the Committee also covered areas such as promoting tolerance, addressing negative attitudes, removing discrimination, and working actively with Romani communities for the full enjoyment of their rights. The Committee requested the Government of Eritrea to provide, in the next report, information on the fulfillment of the rights of children belonging to minority groups, and recommended to prioritize the issue of access to healthcare for children of minority groups. It also expressed concerns over the lack of adequate institutional structures to ensure birth registration of all children, and especially minorities. Additionally the Committee discussed and made recommendations on the situation of children of minority groups in relation to adoption and education opportunities in Georgia and Serbia.

Under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict the following State reports were considered: **Philippines, Republic of Korea and United States of America.**

In relation to the report of the *United States*, the Committee expressed concern over the reported recruitment into the armed forces through campaigns targeted to children belonging to ethnic and racial minorities, along with other vulnerable socio-economic groups.

For more information see:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs48.htm>

30 June to 18 July 2008 - CEDAW

The 41st session of the **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** is taking place from 30 June to 18 July 2008 in New York. During the session the Committee is considering the following State party reports: **Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Nigeria, Slovakia, United**

Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Tanzania, and Yemen. More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws41.htm>.

7 July to 25 July 2008 - CCPR

The **Human Rights Committee (CCPR)** will be holding its 93rd session from 7 to 25 July 2008 in Geneva. The following State Reports will be examined during this session: **France, San Marino, Ireland, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.** The Country Report Task Forces will consider and adopt list of issues on reports submitted by **Denmark, Monaco, Spain, Rwanda and Sweden.** For more information please refer to: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs93.htm>.

28 July to 15 August 2008 - CERD

The 73rd session of the **Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)** will take place from 28 July to 15 August 2008. The Committee will consider the following State reports during the session: **Ecuador, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Togo Namibia, and Russian Federation.** Under the Committee's review procedure, whereby it considers country situations in the absence of a State party report, the following countries will be reviewed: **Belize and Peru.** For more information please refer to:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds73.htm>.

15 September to 3 October 2008 - CRC

The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** will hold its 49th session from 15 September to 3 October 2008. The Committee will consider the following State reports: **Bhutan, Djibouti, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.** Under the Optional Protocol to CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the following State reports will be considered: **Austria, Lithuania, Tanzania and Uganda.** Under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed

Conflict the following State reports will be considered: **Tanzania, Uganda, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**. More information can be found at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs49.htm>.
