



Table of contents

- **Minority Fellowship Programmes 2008 and 2009**
- **Inter-Agency Group on Minorities (IAGM)**
- **Independent Expert on Minority Issues**
- **Forum on Minority Issues**
- **Social Forum**
- **Call for applications for the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery**
- **Universal Periodic Review**
- **Durban Review Conference Preparatory Process**
- **CESCR General discussion on "Discrimination and economic, social and cultural rights"**
- **Treaty Bodies and country reviews**

Minority Fellowship Programmes 2008 and 2009

The 2008 *Arabic-speaking* fellowship will take place 1-19 December 2008 (to coincide with the inaugural session of the Forum on Minority Issues, see below).

The following candidates have been selected for the programme:

- Mr. Sameer Nooruldeen Hasan al Faili (Kurd Failya from Iraq)
- Mr. Biram Dah Abeid (Haratin from Mauritania)

- Mr. Siddik Mohamad Al Jabran (Shia Jaafari from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
- Ms. Avin Mahmoud Hawas (Kurd from Syria)
- Ms. Amna Abdalla Osman Wadi (Zaghawa from Sudan)

The 2009 *English-speaking* fellowship will take place at the OHCHR office in Geneva from around April for three months. The **application deadline is 17 November 2008**. More information and the application form can be found on the fellowships website: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/fellowprog.htm>.

Contact person: Ilona Alexander
ialexander@ohchr.org.

Inter-Agency Group on Minorities (IAGM)

The fifth consultation of the IAGM took place on 15 October 2008 at the Palais Wilson in Geneva, with the participation of the ILO, IPU, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNITAR and WHO. Ms. Gay McDougall, the Independent Expert on Minority Issues joined the group via a videoconference for one agenda item - update and Q&A session on the inaugural session of the Forum on Minority Issues.

An Information Note for OHCHR staff and other practitioners, entitled *Towards Developing Country Engagement Strategies on Minorities*, which was developed upon the request of and in co-operation with the IAGM, was launched at the meeting. The Note will shortly be placed at the OHCHR website and disseminated widely among OHCHR staff, especially in the field, for comments. It is still considered a work in progress and it is

hoped that this road-testing will help the OHCHR to evaluate the usefulness of the note and improve it for a final hard copy publication.

Other agenda items included OHCHR minority fellowships and interagency cooperation; recent developments at the Human Rights Council, especially the Universal Periodic Review and its consideration of minority issues during the first cycle and discussion about interagency cooperation for the future review cycle and in the follow-up processes; and the UNDP/IPU project "Promoting Inclusive Parliaments: The representation of minorities and indigenous peoples in Parliament".

Contact person: Ilona Alexander
ialexander@ohchr.org

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Independent Expert on Minority Issues

The Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ms. Gay McDougall, visited Greece from 8 to 16 September 2008. In her press statement issued on September 2008, she declared that the visit enabled her to gather substantial information on legislation and policy and to identify positive practices related to the rights of minorities and disadvantaged groups. The Independent Expert visited the cities of Athens and Thessaloniki, the region of Western Thrace and the Prefecture of Florine. She consulted with senior government officials, civil society representatives and community members, including Roma, Muslims and representatives of other religions. The Independent Expert will report fully on her findings to the Human Rights Council in March 2009.

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

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Forum on Minority Issues

The first session of the Forum will take place on **15 and 16 December 2008** in Palais des Nations. The thematic focus for this year will be "Minorities and the Right to Education".

The outcome of the Forum will consist in a set of thematic action-oriented recommendations, which will be presented in March 2009 by the Independent Expert to the Human Rights Council, as an addendum to her annual report.

Draft recommendations will be prepared in advance, on the basis of: contributions by selected organizations and experts, the existing international norms and standards, the current doctrine on the issue, and will be provided to the Forum participants for their comments.

Non-governmental and other civil society organisations wishing to **accredit representatives** to the 2008 Forum are required to fax a request to the Secretariat (+ 41-22 917 90 06) by **Monday 17 November 2008**.

Further information regarding the Forum, including guidelines for submission of information, details of the accreditation procedure, and Secretariat contact details are available on the website of the Forum at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/forum.htm>.

Contact person for more information: Sylvie Saddinger-Calame
ssaddinger-calame@ohchr.org

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Social Forum

The Social Forum (SF) was held from 1 to 3 September 2008, at Palais des Nations. Under the main themes of "poverty and human rights" and "social dimension of the globalization process", the SF heard 28 expert presentations on a wide range of topics and their relationship to poverty: the normative framework of human rights and extreme poverty; foreign debt; international

trade policies; the role and responsibility of the State, NGOs and transnational corporations in poverty eradication; international assistance and cooperation in poverty reduction and eradication; decent and favourable work conditions; good governance/corruption; access to affordable essential drugs and health care; climate change; and food security, the food crisis and the right to food.

The SF was attended by more than 140 representatives from Member States, UN funds, programmes, and specialized agencies, and other intergovernmental bodies, as well as NGOs and civil society organizations .

The report of the SF is scheduled for consideration by the Human Rights Council at its tenth session in March 2009.

Please consult the website <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/poverty/sforum.htm> for more information on the SF, including the presentations to the 2008 session.

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

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Call for applications for the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

The United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery was established in 1991 with the purpose of providing humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. Funding is obtained by means of voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities.

NGOs can request a maximum amount of 15,000 United States dollars per grant from the Fund. Projects undertaken with previous

Trust Fund grants include medical and psychological aid, food, shelter, and vocational training to victims of trafficking for sexual and economic exploitation, support to rehabilitation centres for sexually and physically abused street children and a project to identify and release bonded labourers in the carpet industry and stone quarries. Other projects have provided victims with the means to generate sustainable sources of income, such as sewing machines, hairdressing equipment, or farming tools.

Applications for project grants have to be submitted by **31 December 2008** for analysis by the secretariat of the Fund. Admissible applications are examined by the Board of Trustees at its annual session in September 2009. Application forms and guidelines can be obtained from Melanie Clerc, mclerc@ohchr.org, Tel: +41 22 928 9737, Fax: +41 22 928 9010. More information is available on the website of the fund: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/about/funds/slavery>.

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Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

In 2006 the General Assembly (GA) decided that the Human Rights Council (HRC) shall "undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfilment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments..." (GA resolution 60/251).

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.**

The fourth session of the UPR WG is scheduled to take place **from 2 to 13 February 2009** and will consider the following countries: **Cameroon, Djibouti,**

Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Bangladesh, China and Jordan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Mexico, Canada, Germany, Russian Federation and Azerbaijan.

The deadlines for the submission of stakeholders' input for both of these sessions have already passed.

The fifth session of the UPR WG is scheduled to take place from 4 to 15 May 2009. Submissions from NGOs are invited by:

- 3 November 2008 for submissions on Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen and Afghanistan; and
- 10 November 2008 for submissions on Uruguay, Belize, Chile, Malta, Monaco, New Zealand, Slovakia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The sixth session of the UPR WG is scheduled to take place from 30 November to 11 December 2009. Submissions from NGOs are invited by:

- 13 April 2009 for submissions on Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia; and
- 20 April 2009 for submissions on Republic of Korea, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Norway, Portugal and Albania.

NGOs are invited to contribute information for consideration and possible inclusion by OHCHR in a summary of stakeholders' input for the UPR WG sessions. 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. A note of information and guidelines for relevant stakeholders on the UPR is available at

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBODIES/UPR/Documents/TechnicalGuideEN.pdf>.

Submissions should be sent to OHCHR at the following email address:

UPRsubmissions@ohchr.org.

All available UPR documentation is posted at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>.

Contact for further details: OHCHR Civil Society Unit, tel: + 41 22 917 96 56; fax: + 41 22 917 90 11; email: civilsocietyunit@ohchr.org.

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Durban Review Conference Preparatory Process

The second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Durban Review Conference met in Geneva from 6 to 17 October 2008. The session saw the beginning of negotiations on the draft Outcome Document of the Review Conference.

During the first week of the session, Member States made an initial compilation of suggested paragraphs for the Outcome Document of the Durban Review Conference. All relevant documentation in relation to the five sections of the draft Outcome Document is available at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/session2-documentation.htm>.

During the second week of the session, Member States started reviewing the compilations for each of the five sections of the draft outcome document.

In terms of participation of NGOs in the PrepCom, it was agreed that NGOs will take the floor after the reading of each section. However, this arrangement was changed because only the reading of one section was completed. NGOs were then allowed to speak on the last two days on all the remaining sections. Several NGOs took the floor and made concrete proposals regarding the final outcome document of the Review Conference.

The PrepCom Bureau also met with NGOs on 6 October 2008.

The PrepCom took decisions regarding the continuation of the preparatory process and agreed to convene a **third substantive session in Geneva from 15 to 17 April 2009**.

Therefore, **the deadline for receiving applications from new NGOs** (those that do not have consultative status with ECOSOC, did not participate at the WCAR and have not been accredited by the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference) that wish to be accredited to the Durban Review Conference **has been moved forward to 10 February 2009**. In order to be considered, applications for accreditation by NGOs must be received by the Secretariat before this date. *Those NGOs that applied for accreditation after the original deadline had elapsed (1 August 2008) are kindly requested to resubmit their applications.*

The PrepCom further decided to establish an inter-sessional open-ended intergovernmental working group with a mandate to continue and finalize the process of negotiations on and drafting of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference on the basis of the compilation of proposals resulting from the work of the second substantive session of the PrepCom and any further contributions, and to report thereon to the third substantive session of the Preparatory Committee. This new working group will meet for a total of up to 10 working days in advance of the third substantive session of the PrepCom: its first organizational meeting is scheduled on 27 November 2008, the first session of the Working Group will take place from 19 to 23 January 2009, and its second session from 6 to 9 April 2009 (These dates may be subject to change).

The second part of the sixth session of the *Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action* is taking place from **3-7 November 2008** (instead of from 29 September to 3 October as originally announced).

The OHCHR Anti-Discrimination Unit is now publishing an E-bulletin for NGOs on the Durban Review Conference. If you want to be added to the mailing and/or for any other queries E-mail: adusecretariat@ohchr.org.

For more information see: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/sessions.htm>.

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CESCR General discussion on "Discrimination and economic, social and cultural rights"

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights will hold a half-Day of General Discussion (DGD) on discrimination and economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with article 2 (2) of the Covenant. The DGD will take place in Geneva, OHCHR, Palais Wilson, 52, rue des Pâquis, 1201 Genève, Ground Floor Conference Room, on **Monday 17 November 2008 from 15.00 to 18.00**.

The General Discussion will

- Explore the various obligations that article 2 (2) imposes on States parties;
- Analyse the prohibited grounds of non-discrimination; and,
- Reflect on possible means State parties can adopt at the national level for the implementation of article 2 (2).

Draft General Comment on non-discrimination

The DGD will offer an opportunity to the Committee to review its draft General Comment on non-discrimination in the light of the comments and suggestions made by the experts.

States parties, United Nations specialised agencies and bodies, United Nations human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions, trade unions, employers' organisations, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions and other interested organisations or individuals are invited to participate in the DGD and also to provide

comments and suggestions on its draft General Comment on non-discrimination.

Registration form which needs to be submitted **no later than by 10 November 2008** is available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/discussion17112008.htm>.

Comments and suggestions on the draft General Comment should be sent to the Secretariat by email (CESCRdiscussionday@ohchr.org) by 17 November 2008.

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Treaty Bodies and country reviews

15 September to 3 October 2008 - CRC

From 15 September to 3 October 2008, the **Committee on the Rights of the Child** held its 49th session, in which the State party reports of **Bhutan, Djibuti, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** as well as UK overseas territories and crown dependencies were considered.

In its concluding observations to the *Bhutan* report, the Committee expresses concern over the ability of children belonging to minority groups, in particular of Nepalese ethnic origin, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and to use their own language and recommended that the State party recognizes these rights.

In relation to the report submitted by the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, the Committee noted various measures taken by the State party, including plans to consolidate and strengthen equality legislation, with clear opportunities to mainstream children's right to non-discrimination into the UK anti-discrimination law (Equality Bill). However, the Committee expressed concerns that in practice certain groups of children belonging to minority groups, such as Roma, Irish Travelers but also others, continue to experience discrimination and social stigmatization. Therefore the

Committee recommended that the State party ensure full protection against discrimination on any grounds by strengthening its awareness-raising and other preventive activities against discrimination and, if necessary, take affirmative actions for the benefit of these vulnerable groups of children. The Committee also expressed concern at the increased numbers of children in alternative care and, in particular, the high percentage of children of African descent, children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities therein. The Committee was similarly concerned that children of African descent and children of ethnic minorities sometimes face long period waiting for adoption by a family of the same ethnic origin.

The Committee also reviewed, under the **Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography** State party reports by **Australia, Lithuania, Tanzania and Uganda**. The Committee's concluding observations for *Tanzania* and *Uganda* expressed its concern about the lack of statistical data disaggregated by age, sex, minority group, socio-economic background and geographic location.

The Committee also reviewed State party reports of **Tanzania, Uganda and the UK** under the **Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict**. Under this protocol, the concluding remarks on the *UK* report mentioned its active policy of recruitment of children into the armed forces and recommended that the State ensures that this recruitment is not conducted in a manner which specifically targets ethnic minorities and children of low income families.

For more information please refer to: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/cs49.htm>.

13 to 31 October 2008 - HRC

The 94th session of the **Human Rights Committee** took place from 13 to 31 October

2008. During the session the Committee considered the State Party reports of **Nicaragua, Monaco, Denmark, Japan and Spain.**

In its concluding observations to the report of *Denmark* the Committee recommended that the State party should pay particular attention to the self-identification of the individuals concerned in the determination of their status as persons belonging to minorities or indigenous peoples. The Committee recommended the State to translate and disseminate the concluding observations into minority languages spoken in Denmark, including Faroese.

Regarding the report submitted by *Japan*, the Committee requested that the State party's fifth periodic report and the present concluding observations be published and widely disseminated, to the extent possible, in national minority languages.

During this session, the **Country Report Task Forces** also adopted list of issues on reports submitted by **Australia, Chad, Azerbaijan the Netherlands and Rwanda.**

More information can be found at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs94.htm>.

20 October to 7 November 2008 - CEDAW
The **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women** is holding its 42nd session from 20 October to 7 November 2008 in Geneva. The Committee is considering the following State reports: **Belgium, Canada, Myanmar, Portugal, Slovenia, and Uruguay.** The concluding observations will soon be available at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws42.htm>.

3 to 21 November 2008 - CESCR
The **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** will hold its 41st session from 3 to 21 November 2008. The Committee will

consider the following State reports: **Philippines, Angola, UNMIK, and Sweden.** More information can be found at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrs41.htm>.

This Committee will also hold its **Pre-session Working Group** from 24 to 28 November. During this session, it will consider the following State reports: **Cambodia, Chad, Cyprus, Madagascar, Poland, Republic of Korea.** For more information please visit:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrwg41.htm>.

3 to 21 November 2008 - CAT
The **Committee against Torture** will hold its 41st session from 3 to 21 November 2008, during which it will consider the State reports of **China, Lithuania, Montenegro, and Serbia.** More information can be found at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/cats41.htm>.

12 to 30 January 2009 - CRC
The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** will hold its 50th session from 12 to 30 January 2009 and will consider the following State reports: **Malawi, Moldova, and the Netherlands.** More information will soon be available at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs50.htm>.

19 January to 6 February 2009 - CEDAW
The 43rd session of the **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women** will meet from 19 January - 6 February 2009. During this session, the Committee will consider the following State reports: **Armenia, Germany, and Lybia.** More information will soon be available at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws43.htm>.

16 February to 6 March 2009 - CERD
The **Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** will hold its 74th session from

16 February to 6 March 2009. The Committee will consider the following State reports: **Bulgaria, Congo, Croatia, Finland, Montenegro, Pakistan, Turkey, Tunisia, and Suriname.**

More information will soon be available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds74.htm>.
