



Table of contents

- **Minority Fellowship Programmes 2008, 2009 and 2010**
- **Independent Expert on Minority Issues**
- **Forum on Minority Issues**
- **GA resolution A/RES/63/174**
- **UNDP Resource Guide on Minorities in Development validation consultation**
- **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, 2009 and 2010

The 2008 *Arabic-speaking* fellowship took place 1-19 December 2008. The dates and application deadlines for the 2009 programme will be announced on our website in due course.

The 2009 *English-speaking* fellowship will take place at the OHCHR office in Geneva from **1 April to 17 July 2009**. Applications are currently under review and names of

selected candidates will be posted on our website by the end of January 2009.

As our fellowship is becoming more and more established, we are changing our selection procedures in order to give a greater voice to minority representatives in selecting the fellows. All applications for the 2010 fellowship will thus be pre-screened by the 2009 fellows who will draw-up a long-list of 15 candidates. The final selection will be made based on phone interviews and the decisions of an advisory board. In order to facilitate the pre-selection by the 2009 fellows, *the application deadline for the 2010 fellowship is likely to be around 30 June 2009* (for the fellowship dates of approximately April-June 2010). *The call for applications and the application form will be posted on our website by the end of February 2009. Keep your eyes at:*

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

Contact person: Ilona Alexander
ialexander@ohchr.org.

Independent Expert on Minority Issues

On 20 November 2008, the Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ms. Gay McDougall, and the new Special Rapporteur on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mr. Githu Muigai, issued a press statement urging European governments to take wide action to stop violence against Roma. Both UN experts stated that the policies and actions of numerous States have been, at best, inadequate to resolve intolerable conditions of poverty, marginalization and

exclusion experienced by the Romani minority in Europe. Policies such as finger-printing of Roma, abuse by police, and racist statements by senior public officials contribute to creating a climate in which societal discrimination and racism are sustained and enhanced. Ms. McDougall noted that if governments deliver the message that Roma are a problem, extremists may feel that they have license for attacking them. The experts stated their belief that the growing anti-Romani sentiment and violent incidents in several European countries require both a national and Europe-wide response. The full press statement is available at:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/021F008588C0AF40C1257507005A3964?opendocument>.

On 8 December 2008, Ms. Gay McDougall joined other Special Procedures Mandate Holders in issuing a joint press release to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The full press statement is available at:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/63ED58DDBF4EB945C125751A002B3D66?opendocument>

On 10 December 2008, Ms. Gay McDougall joined several other Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts in issuing a joint press statement welcoming the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights by the General Assembly. The experts highlighted that this adoption makes it clear that economic, social and cultural rights, including the rights to adequate housing, food, health, education and work, are not a matter of charity, but rights that can be claimed by all without discrimination of any kind. The experts declared that the combination of the petitions mechanism, the inquiry procedure and the possibility of interim measures will contribute to a body of jurisprudence around these rights, thereby helping States to ensure their implementation. The full press statement is available at:

<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/C5486C42747EC60BC125751B005B08B3?opendocument>

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

.....
Forum on Minority Issues

On 15 and 16 December 2008, the inaugural session of the Forum on Minority Issues took place in Palais des Nations in Geneva. The Forum, which was organized under the guidance of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ms. Gay McDougall, gathered participants from Member States, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions from all over the world to discuss the issue of "Minorities and the Right to Education". A number of experts, most of them belonging to minority groups and representing all regions of the world, were invited to share their experience when it comes to access to education for members of minority groups. The Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Mr. Vernor Muñoz, and representatives of the human rights treaty bodies also participated in the Forum. The Forum was opened by the President of the Human Rights Council and the High Commissioner also made opening remarks. The Independent Expert will report on the recommendations of the Forum to the Human Rights Council in March 2009. For more information about the Forum, please visit its web site:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/forum.htm>

Contact person for more information: Sylvie Saddier-Calame ssaddier-calame@ohchr.org

.....
GA resolution A/RES/63/174 (adopted 18 December 2008)

On 18 December 2008, the General Assembly approved without a vote resolution 63/174 on *The effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. The resolution urges States and the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, through the encouragement of conditions for the promotion of their identity, the provision of adequate education and the facilitation of their participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of society. It also urges States to take all necessary constitutional, legislative and administrative measures to give effect to the Declaration, and calls upon them to cooperate with the Independent Expert on Minority Issues. The resolution also welcomes the establishment of the Forum on Minority Issues and invites all relevant actors to participate actively in its inaugural session.

.....

UNDP Resource Guide on Minorities in Development validation consultation 2-3 December 2008

For the past two years, the OHCHR and the Independent Expert on Minority Issues have participated in the elaboration of the **UNDP Resource Guide on Minorities in Development** as members of a task force. This guide is intended to serve as a first step towards a specific policy note on how to deal with minorities in UNDP programming processes and is partly based on a month-long UNDP-wide survey. **On 2-3 December 2008** consultation was organized in New York to validate the draft resource guide with representatives of the task force as well as UNDP staff from headquarters and country offices.

Contact person: Ilona Alexander
ilalexander@ohchr.org

.....

Call for applications for the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery - new deadline 31 March 2009

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 March 2009** 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>.

.....

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 Working Group was held from 1 to 12 December 2008 and considered the following countries: Botswana, Bahamas, Burundi, Luxembourg, Barbados, Montenegro, United Arab Emirates, Israel, Liechtenstein, Serbia, Turkmenistan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Uzbekistan and Tuvalu. In March 2009, the HRC will meet in plenary session and adopt the outcome of the UPR; a one-hour meeting is devoted to each above-listed State under Review (SuR). At the HRC plenary session, the SuR, HRC Member States, Observers including UN entities, as well as stakeholders, including national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, have the opportunity to make interventions.

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, Jordan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Mexico, Canada, Germany, Russian Federation and Azerbaijan.

The fifth session of the UPR WG is scheduled to take place from 4 to 15 May 2009 and will consider: Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen and Afghanistan, Uruguay, Belize, Chile, Malta, Monaco, New Zealand, Slovakia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The deadlines for the submission of stakeholders' input for these sessions have passed.

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>.

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

.....
Durban Review Conference Preparatory Process

The *Inter-sessional Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group (ISWG)* established by the PrepCom convened for its organizational meeting on **27 November 2008**. This Working Group is tasked with continuing and finalizing the process of negotiations on, and the drafting of, what will become the draft 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. The latest version of the compilation for the

outcome document is available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/sessions.htm> (the last document on this page) and it is expected that this text will be adopted as basis of negotiations at the next session of the ISWG from **19 to 23 January 2009**. A further session is envisaged from **6 to 9 April 2009** (*these dates may be subject to change*).

On 5 December 2008, the ISWG held a meeting with interested NGOs accredited to the Durban Review Conference. Another meeting is scheduled for **16 January 2009** in room XXIII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, at 1:00 pm.

Modalities for NGO participation at the sessions of the ISWG are the same as those for the sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference. NGOs may *make statements as observers* at appropriate moments to be determined by the Chair of the meeting but may not participate directly in the negotiation process. *Written contributions* by NGOs may be *submitted to the Secretariat* prior to or during the meeting. Participation at the meetings of the Working Group is open to NGOs that have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, those that participated at the World Conference against Racism held in 2001 as well as those that have been accredited by the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference.

The second part of the sixth session of the *Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action* took place on **18 December 2008** in Geneva.

The 8th session of the *Working Group of Experts on People of African descent* will take place at the Palais des Nations (Room XXI) from **12 to 16 January 2009**. The session will focus on an assessment of the work of the Working Group since its creation. Besides developing its programme of work for the future, including its meetings, country

visits and participation in the Durban Review process, it will also devote a day to an analysis of the situation of children of African descent.

The third substantive session of the PrepCom will take place in Geneva from **15 to 17 April 2009**.

The deadline for applications for travel support for NGOs to attend the Durban Review Conference has passed. A letter informing selected NGOs that they will be receiving travel assistance will be sent out by *end of January 2009*. This assistance will take the form of pre-paid return airline tickets for one representative of each selected NGO in economy class by the most direct available route. The list of selected NGOs will be available at the OHCHR Extranet.

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 extended 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 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.

A new website dedicated specifically to the Durban Review Conference will be launched shortly.

For more information see:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/sessions.htm>.

.....

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

On 17 November 2008, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights held 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 General Discussion

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

The DGD also offered 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.

For more information see: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/discussion17112008.htm>.

..... **Treaty Bodies and country reviews**

20 October to 7 November 2008 - CEDAW

The 42nd session of the **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women** took place from 20 October to 7 November 2008 in Geneva. The State reports of **Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Ecuador, El Salvador, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mongolia, Myanmar, Portugal, Slovenia, and Uruguay** were considered.

In its concluding observations to the report of *Belgium*, the Committee expressed concern that the ban of headscarves in schools may increase the discrimination faced by girls from ethnic and religious minorities and may impede equality of access to education. It recommended that the State party pay special attention to the needs of girls

belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and ensure that they have equal access to education and promote a dialogue with and within ethnic and religious communities aimed at the formulation of a common approach to the ban of headscarves in schools. The Committee was similarly concerned about continuing discrimination against minority women and recommended to take effective measures to eliminate this discrimination including through awareness-raising programs.

In relation to the report submitted by *Canada*, the Committee was concerned about poverty, multiple forms of discrimination, high levels of violence, and significant underrepresentation in political and public life, experienced by women from various ethnic and minority communities. It recommended that the State party should eliminate discrimination, develop a specific and integrated plan for addressing the particular conditions affecting minority women and to ensure that minority women are empowered to participate in the necessary governance and legislative processes that address issues impeding their legal and substantive equality.

Regarding the report of *Ecuador*, the Committee expressed concerns about reports of discrimination against minority women and recommended the State party to ensure investigation of such cases and to undertake remedial action in line with its Constitution.

In its concluding observations to the report of *Myanmar*, the Committee expressed concern that members of the Muslim minority in northern Rakhine have been denied Myanmar citizenship and recommended that the State party recognizes their right to nationality.

Regarding the report of *Uruguay*, the Committee regretted the absence of any proactive measures to promote the rights of minority women and urged the State party to take effective measures to eliminate discrimination against minority women and to

recognize minority women's contributions to the economy by collecting sex-disaggregated data on rural production and to ensure the incorporation of a gender perspective in all development programs, with special attention to minority rural women.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws42.htm>.

3 to 21 November 2008 - CESCR

From 3 to 21 November 2008 the **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** held its 41st session, in which the State party reports of **Philippines, Angola, Kenya, Nicaragua, UNMIK, and Sweden** were considered.

In relation to the report submitted by *Kenya*, the Committee recommended that the State party addresses disparities in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, including in access to land, which particularly affect minority and indigenous communities in rural areas. Regarding the report submitted by *Sweden*, the Committee reiterated its concern about the persistent occurrence of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, in particular against the Romani minority and encouraged the State party to strengthen its efforts and to take additional steps to prevent discrimination. It also recommended that the State party ensure the effective implementation of its legal provisions which authorize the use of certain minority languages before public authorities and courts.

In its concluding observations on the *United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo* (UNMIK) report, the Committee noted with appreciation the Anti-Discrimination Law (2004), which among others provides special protection for minority communities. It recommended that UNMIK identify funds and encourage the Kosovo authorities to address the needs of Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and other non-Serbian ethnic minority communities. The Committee also expressed

concern about the low number of internally displaced persons and refugees, in particular those belonging to minority communities, who have returned to their pre-armed conflict homes in recent years and recommended intensifying efforts to ensure sustainable return. It also noted with concern the low enrolment of girls, especially from non-Serbian minority communities, in secondary schools and the very limited opportunities for children from non-Serbian minority communities, in particular Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, to receive instruction in or of their mother tongue and on their history and culture. It recommended that UNMIK identify funds and advise the relevant Kosovo authorities on the urgent need to sensitize parents on the importance of education for their children, including for their daughters and to recognize the rights of children from non-Serbian minority communities to adequate opportunities at all levels of education.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrs41.htm>.

24 to 28 November 2008 - CESCR WG

The Committee also held its **Pre-sessional Working Group** from 24 to 28 November 2008 and adopted list of issues for the following State reports: **Cambodia, Chad, Cyprus, Madagascar, Poland, and the Republic of Korea**. Minority issues were raised in relation to Cambodia, Cyprus, Madagascar and Poland.

For more information see:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrwg41.htm>.

3 to 21 November 2008 - CAT

The **Committee against Torture** held its 41st session from 3 to 21 November 2008, during which it considered the State reports of **Belgium, China, Hong Kong SAR, Macao SAR, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lithuania, Montenegro, and Serbia**.

In its concluding observations on the report of *China*, the Committee expressed concern about the failure to investigate allegations of torture and other ill-treatment in "Re-education through Labour" (RTL) facilities, in particular against members of certain religious and ethnic minority groups. It also expressed its concern about the absence of comprehensive or disaggregated data on various aspects of abuse in the administration of justice and violence against ethnic and religious minorities. The Committee was greatly concerned by the allegations of targeted torture, ill-treatment, and disappearances directed against national, ethnic, religious minorities and other vulnerable groups in China, among them Tibetans, Uighurs, and Falun Gong practitioners. It recommended that the State party ensure the protection of members of groups especially at risk of ill-treatment, by pursuing prompt, impartial and effective investigations into all ethnically motivated violence and discrimination, including acts directed against persons belonging to ethnic minorities. The State party should, inter alia, give prompt consideration to expanding the recruitment of persons belonging to ethnic minorities into law enforcement. The Committee also recommended that the State party should implement the population policy in full compliance with the relevant provisions of the Convention and prosecute those responsible for resorting to coercive and violent measures in implementing such policy, in particular against women belonging to ethnic minority groups.

In relation to the report submitted by *Lithuania*, the Committee expressed concern at reports of ill-treatment and discrimination of ethnic minorities, especially the Roma, including at the hands of law enforcement officials, in particular the police. It recommended that the State party should intensify its efforts to combat these phenomena. Regarding the report submitted by *Montenegro*, the Committee noted various measures adopted by the State party,

including the Strategy for Minority Policy and the establishment in 2006 of the "Funds for Minorities" but expressed concerns about discriminatory treatment suffered by the Roma. It recommended that the State strengthen its efforts to implement the various plans and strategies addressing minorities, including Roma, so as to improve their extremely precarious living conditions and ensure their access to education, employment, healthcare and social welfare, in a non-discriminatory manner.

In its concluding observation to the report of *Serbia*, the Committee expressed concern about the hostile environment for human rights defenders working on minority rights and recommended that the State party recognizes them and their work. It also noted with concern the failure to protect minorities from violent attacks and recommended that the State party should take all appropriate measures to prevent these, especially when political events indicate that minorities may be at heightened risk of violence.

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: **Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Moldova, Netherlands and Republic of Chad.**

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crc50.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, Cameroon, Dominica, Germany,**

Guatemala, Haiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Ruanda.

More information can be found 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 and will consider the following State reports:, **Bulgaria, Congo, Croatia, Finland, Montenegro, Pakistan, Turkey, Tunisia, and Suriname.**

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds74.htm>.

16 March to 3 April 2009 - HRC

The 95th session of the **Human Rights Committee** will take place from 16 March to 3 April 2009. During the session the Committee will consider the State Party reports of **Australia, Chad, Rwanda and Sweden.**

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs95.htm>.

27 April - 15 May 2009 - CAT

The **Committee against Torture** will hold its 42nd session from 27 April to 15 May 2009 and consider the following State reports: **Chad, Chile, Honduras, Israel, New Zealand, Nicaragua and Philippines.**

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/cats42.htm>

20 April - 1 May 2009 - CMW

The **Committee on Migrant Workers** will hold its 10th session from 20 April to 1 May 2009 and will consider the following State reports: **Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Philippines.**

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/cmws10.htm>
